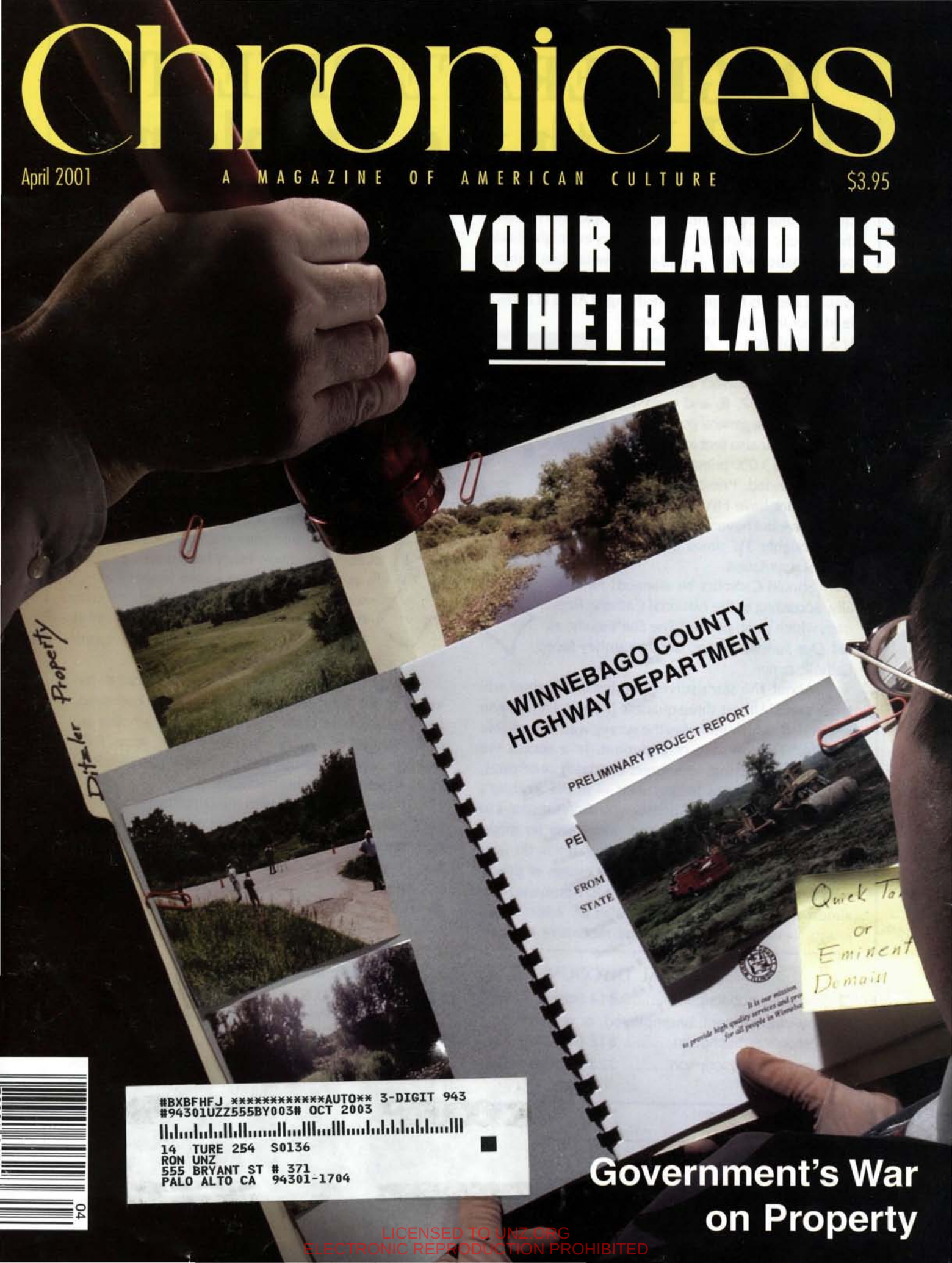
Chronicles

April 2001 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $3.95

YOUR LAND IS THEIR LAND



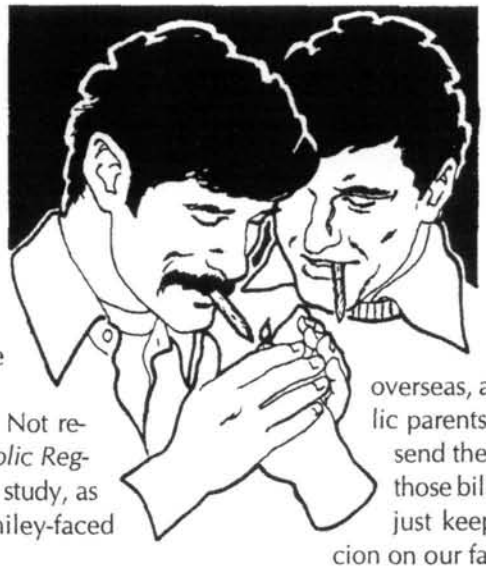
#BXBFHFJ **********AUTO** 3-DIGIT 943
#94301UZZ555BY003# OCT 2003
14 TURE 254 S0136
RON UNZ
555 BRYANT ST # 371
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

Government's War on Property

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DEGENERATE PRIESTS: Deal With the Problem !

Recently *The Kansas City Star* reported on a major study it conducted on homosexuality and AIDS cases in the Catholic priesthood (the series ran in Knight Ridder papers nationwide). *The Star*'s now-famous verdict, based on death certificates of priests and other sources, was: "it appears that priests are dying of AIDS at a rate at least four times that of the general U.S. population...." According to *The Star*, this is a conservative estimate, for other statistics and experts put the rate at 7, 8, and even 11 times that of the general population.



The Star also sent a confidential survey to 3,000 priests, of whom 801 responded. Priests who said they "either have HIV or AIDS or might have but haven't been tested" were roughly 3½ times that of the general population.

Should Catholics be alarmed? Not really, according to the *National Catholic Register*, which pooh-poohed *The Star*'s study, as did *Our Sunday Visitor*, another smiley-faced Catholic paper.

About *The Star*'s survey of priests, a *Register* editorial said: "Almost three-quarters [73 percent]...never responded, which indicates the survey wasn't a reliable sample." For the sake of argument, let's accept the *Register*'s nay-saying, let's forget the death certificates, and let's go so far as to speculate — in the *Register*'s favor — that of the 2,199 priests who didn't respond to the survey, none has AIDS and none fears he might (which of course is extremely unlikely). If you do your math, that would mean that the percentage of priests who have AIDS or are engaging in AIDS-prone activity almost matches the general population. Yikes! If our priests — whom we expect to be *models* of Catholic morality and who take a *vow* of celibacy — are almost as degenerate as the general population, we've got a huge problem! Even if they're only half as degenerate, we've got a major problem. After all, they're *priests!*

The *Los Angeles Times* has reported that, according to Linkup, a group supporting victims of sexually immoral clergy, the Catholic Church nationwide "has paid $1 billion in lawsuit judgments and settlements since 1985." That's a staggering sum, most of it coming out of the pockets of the long-suffering and bewildered laity. Just imagine how many prolife projects could have been funded, how many *beautiful* churches could have been erected, how many missionaries could have been sent overseas, and how many hard-working Catholic parents could have gotten financial aid to send their children to Catholic schools with those billion dollars! And the scandals, which just keep coming, cast unwarranted suspicion on our faithful, moral priests.

When Catholic papers can be perceived as trying to shoot the messenger conveying the bad news, few Catholics are reassured. Moreover, Catholics are sick and tired of denials, damage-control, spins, P.R., and episcopal cover-ups and hush-hush pay-offs. Real Catholics demand a housecleaning!

If you want to deal with the crippling problems in the Church — not just duplicitous priests but liturgical desecration, church demolition palmed off as "renovation," bogus Catholic "education," and New Age "nuns" — subscribe to the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, an orthodox Catholic monthly magazine that takes no prisoners.

(Please allow 2 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue.)

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES FOR FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

- ☐ One-year subscription ..... $14 (regularly $19)
- ☐ One-year student, unemployed, or retired person's subscription ..... $12 (regularly $16)
- ☐ Two-year subscription ..... $23 (regularly $35)
- ☐ One-year non-U.S. subscription ..... US$24 (regularly $29) Payment must be drawn in U.S. Dollars.
- ☐ Sample copy $3.50

➔ Our prices are *so low* because you can't pay by credit card and payment must accompany order. Send letter or this coupon with check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW.

Name (Please print or type)

Street Address or P.O. Box

City State Zip

Mail to:
NEW OXFORD REVIEW
Room 306
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley CA 94706

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

PERSPECTIVE

The Conservative War on Property 10
by Thomas Fleming

The legacy of John Locke.

VIEWS

For Keeps! 13
by Scott P. Richert
A Christian defense of property.

Civil Rights or Property Rights? 17
by Justin Raimondo
The coming police state.

The Virtues of Property 20
by Stephen B. Presser
Restoring the Framers' Constitution.

OPINIONS

Antiquities of the Republic 22
by Samuel Francis

Forrest McDonald: *States' Rights and the Union: Imperium in Imperio, 1776-1876*

The perennial conflict.

REVIEWS

Alan Tonelson has opened the debate on trade and immigration in *The Race to the Bottom: Why a Worldwide Worker Surplus and Uncontrolled Free Trade Are Sinking American Living Standards*, writes **Richard D. Lamm** ◆ **George Garrett** finds that Thomas Wolfe's *O Lost: A Story of the Buried Life* and *To Loot My Life Clean: The Thomas Wolfe-Maxwell Perkins Correspondence* answer some questions but raise others ◆ **Thomas Fleming** recommends Eugenio Corti's masterwork, *The Red Horse* ◆ At the end of David Leadbetter's and Lorne Rubinstein's *The Fundamentals of Hogan*, golf is still a mystery, marvels **J.O. Tate** ◆ 24

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Rome: Rome as We Found It 31
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Letter From Detroit: Field of Schemes 36
by John O'Neill

Letter From Eivissa: *Dos mojitos, por favor* 37
by John Carney

Letter From London: Blair's Ditch Project 40
by Derek Turner

Letter From Cortina: Roman Holiday 41
by Andrei Navrozov

VITAL SIGNS

GOVERNMENT: **Your Tax Dollars At Work** 45
by Philip Jenkins

SOCIETY: **Kitchen Table Warriors** 46
by Jeff Minick

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 7

LETTER FROM ROCKFORD 29
A Month in the Life of the Industrial Midwest
by Scott P. Richert

THE AMERICAN INTEREST 44
Sharon's Victory and U.S. Policy in the Middle East
by Srdja Trifkovic

IN THE DARK 49
Snatch, Shadow of the Vampire, Thirteen Days
by George McCartney

POETRY
Turner's Watercolour: "Holy Island—Northumberland" 12
by Peter Hunt

Heart Murmur by Gail White 26

ON THE COVER

Cover by Tom Clabough; inside illustrations by H. Ward Sterett and Anatol Woolf.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Aaron D. Wolf

ART DIRECTOR
H. Ward Sterett

DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis, George Garrett, Paul Gottfried, Philip Jenkins, J.O. Tate, Michael Washburn, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Janet Scott Barlow, Bill Kauffman, Donald Livingston, William Mills, William Murchison, Andrei Navrozov, Jacob Neusner

FILM EDITOR
George McCartney

FOREIGN-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Srdja Trifkovic

LEGAL-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Stephen B. Presser

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

EDITORIAL SECRETARY
Leann Dobbs

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, Ohio 44848-9705.

Copyright © 2001 by The Rockford Institute.
All rights reserved.

Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture
(ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.00 (foreign subscriptions add $12 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 25, No. 4 April 2001
Printed in the United States of America

On John Locke

To argue, as Paul Gottfried did in "Distrusting John Locke" (*Views*, January), that the writings of John Locke were not instrumental to the founding of this country is to suppose that the authors of the *Federalist* did not know what they were about. In philosophy, John Locke was sometimes an extremist, and he was wrong in thinking that no ideas are innate (there are a few—for instance, time). But he is still instructive, for most of our ideas *do* come from reasoning about sensory experience. In his *Reasonableness Of Christianity*, Locke saw an inner harmony in the Gospel that others had missed before. His commentaries on some of St. Paul's epistles contained important truths: In his interpretation of Romans, for instance, he refuted the Calvinists on the very scriptural ground that they had considered to be their strongest territory.

But whether one likes Locke or not, the strangest teaching in this misbegotten issue is Dr. Gottfried's assertion that David Hume was an intellectual founder of America. This man was the most pronounced irrationalist in the history of philosophy. Contrast his ideas with the words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths . . . "

Locke wrote an essay defending miracles; Hume attacked them, arguing that any alleged miracle might actually have been the result of a mundane natural law with which the believer is not familiar. Having denied religion in the name of science, Hume then denied science itself by casting doubt on the principle of causality.

Hume perverted Locke's empiricism in the direction of extreme skepticism, just as Rousseau perverted Locke's doctrine of the social contract into a vehicle for collectivism. Kant combined these two perversions with Leibniz to form his critical philosophy; through one of its branches, as a result of Hegel's partial acceptance of Kant, dialectical materialism arose; through another branch, European logical positivism. In the 20th century, Bertrand Russell basically mathematized Hume's skeptical empiricism and combined it (once more) with some Leibnizian ideas, leading to the analytical movement that has devastated academic philosophy in the United States.

Dr. Gottfried's tone turns superior when he criticizes Locke's social-contract theory. "Hume," he writes, "expresses astonishment that a serious thinker could believe that individuals left a 'state of nature' and entered civil society by way of a contract." But it is only right that those who live in darkness should be astonished by the light. Locke did not believe that man evolved out of a primal ooze over millions of years, but that he came into being all at once as an intelligent, wonderful creation of God. I'm sure Locke had read about illiterate tribes of cannibals. But he would have supposed that they were men who had degenerated—like the homosexuals discussed by St. Paul in Romans.

Dr. Gottfried continues: "Hume asked, why did individuals throughout the world live 'in subordination to each other' without a sense of being deprived of rights?" But in the *Second Treatise*, Locke demonstrated how the parent-child relationship fit with his theory. Moreover, history seems to support Locke. The records of ancient peoples do speak of them getting together and agreeing to certain laws and leaders. In Deuteronomy, a great meeting occurs in which the covenant between God and the Hebrews is read, section by section, with blessings upon them if they should keep their agreements and curses if they should break them. This type of a social contract between unequals took place over 1,400 years before the Birth of Christ and was not dissolved until sometime between the Resurrection of Christ and the destruction of Herod's temple.

This does not mean that Locke's theory was perfect. In the *First Letter on Toleration*, he states the idea behind his device: "Covetousness, uncharitableness, idleness, and many other things are sins, by the consent of all men, which yet no man ever said were to be punished by the magistrate. The reason is, because they are not prejudicial to other men's rights, nor do they break the publick peace of societies." *Chronicles* has shown over and over again that this device is breaking down. May *Chronicles* carry on its good work, leaving behind that which is not.

—Peter Erickson
Portland, OR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paul Gottfried's short article rebutting Locke's concept of the "social contract" is unfortunately not as complete as he could have made it, despite his introduction of David Hume into the argument. To be specific, he failed to mention "spontaneous order."

Just when the idea of "spontaneous order" arose is uncertain, but we do know that it was a central feature of the thought of the Scottish Enlightenment, to which Hume as well as Adam Smith were contributors. Even Robert Burns, in his poem "To a Mouse," suggested something related in his famous line "the best laid schemes o' mice 'n men gang aft aglay." Such reasoning by Scottish intellectuals was entirely intuitive, drawn from lessons of history that they subjected to critical examination. While Friedrich von Hayek picked up and extended the concept in its application to political economy, its principal development in this century occurred in the physical sciences, especially by Ilia Prigogine (Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, 1977) and his associates. "Chaos theory" is closely related. Both it and spontaneous order occur naturally in any "non-linear" system and are opposite sides of the same coin.

The rise of a market, an association, *and* a civilization are examples of non-linearity at work. All attempts to build social structures from a "plan" (such as nation-building) will certainly "gang aft aglay," and thus the idea of the "social contract" is pure fantasy.

—*Robert Whitten*
Cupertino, CA

Dr. Gottfried Replies:

In his comments on my "misbegotten issue," Peter Erickson expresses shock that I would consider David Hume an "intellectual founder of America." Given the flattering references to Hume among the Framers and the influence exerted on Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison by Hume's political and historical writings, my description should not cause offense. Erickson should read Forrest McDonald's *Novus Ordo Seclorum* for a comprehensive discussion of Hume's intellectual impact on the formation of the U.S. Constitution. He would also do well to read Hume's *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, which provides a wealth of useful conservative teachings: e.g., "the bulk of mankind is governed by authority, not reason"; therefore, a "wise magistrate is one who will bear reverence for what carries the marks of age."

Pace Erickson, I never suggested that the authors of the *Federalist* were unfamiliar with Locke's work. What I did write is that Locke was not the major influence on their thinking and that what they took from him was not as important as what they borrowed from others, particularly Hume and Montesquieu.

Although Erickson is free to seek religious enlightenment wherever he wants, I find it odd that he would depict Locke as an orthodox Christian theologian. Perhaps I have labored under an illusion, but it seems that Locke's transformation of the Gospels into something "reasonable" does not leave much room for the supernatural. It is, moreover, not clear from *Concerning Human Understanding* that Locke's "eternal thinking being" is non-material; in the same tract (Chapters Six and Seven), we are told that there is no evidence that the human soul functions independently of the body. Erickson may mistake Locke's outward appearance of reverence toward Christian truths in a pervasively Christian society with a sincere devotion to received Christian dogma. On this point, however, I suspect the Straussians are right. Locke was, in all probability, a religious skeptic who tried not to tip his hand. Hume did not "pervert" his empiricism, combining it with theological doubt. He was simply more open about his own metaphysical doubt than Hobbes and Locke had been in the preceding century: Both had felt obliged to represent themselves as Protestant Christians. The *First Letter on Toleration*, which Erickson brings up, is *inter alia* the holding up of a politically inoffensive form of Christianity, a "free and voluntary" association that would not exclude Locke himself as a heretic. "Tolerant" Christians were supposed to offer "houses of worship" to Muslims and pagans, as long as they did not act in the manner of Catholics, who swore fealty to a foreign potentate.

Pace Erickson, there is nothing in the *Second Treatise on Civil Government* that refutes Hume's skeptical view concerning the contractual origin of civil society. Although, in Chapter Eight, Locke considers certain objections to his constructivism, he does not treat them in a satisfactory way. He ends up conceding the point, famously made by Aristotle in the *Politics*, that societies start off as paternal despotism, without showing that most of them turn into the kind of fraternal association that Locke is delineating. No one is denying that Locke based his social theory on a selective view of the organization of the ancient Hebrews, as presented in Deuteronomy and Judges. After all, he cites this illustration. What is at question is whether the Hebraic theocratic model has much to do with Locke's conception of the social contract, and whether that conception represents a general norm for the exercise of power in most societies. Hume is correct to challenge both assumptions as contrary to human observation.

Although I have no objection to Robert Whitten's attempt to Hayekize Hume, I think the experiment should not be pushed to excess. Although Hayek and Hume were both theological skeptics drawn to the Scottish Enlightenment, Hume was far more conservative. He never would have uttered the paeans to democracy as the precondition for political and economic freedom that abound in *The Constitution of Liberty*. As Donald Livingston argues, Hume was not, with due respect to Dr. Johnson, a "Tory by accident." He came by his Toryism honestly, as a defender of monarchical government and aristocracy, which he regarded as a counterweight to popular interest. It astounds me that anyone who believed that community and custom were necessary for human thinking would be condemned as a forerunner of Marxist materialism. But Hume should also not be seen as an apostle of the democratic capitalist ideology now celebrated by our ruling class. He despised democratic imperialists, both ancient and modern.

On Federal Power

William J. Watkins' comment on states being forced to adopt the .08 blood-alcohol standard for drunken driving (*Cultural Revolutions*, January) is a narrow objection to federal power. The feds are not threatening to jail the entire population of any state which does not adopt the standard; they are only threatening not to return some of the money we have already paid to the federal government. Many states receive far less than they pay in. Taxes collected in the Midwest pay for projects so that the residents of California and Arizona can pay less for water. And farmers pay less for irrigation so they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can raise crops that the government has to buy to keep consumer prices high. Taxes collected in other states pay for the costly light rail that is supposed to make commuting easier for residents of Eastern cities. If your town needs a new highway, a waste-water treatment plant, or more teachers, ask the feds. After all, if the funds were raised locally, some politicians would have to put their jobs on the line and raise taxes. But the politicians in Washington are farther removed and don't get blamed if they take more local taxes to spend elsewhere. As a country, we look to Washington to collect the taxes and then are surprised when half is kept for administration and strings are put on the rest when it is given back. "Who pays the piper calls the tune."

—Stuart L. Faber
Cincinnati, OH

Dr. Watkins Replies:

Mr. Faber makes a good point that federal tax dollars channeled to state programs wreak havoc on the principle of accountability. State officials do not have to raise taxes for highway maintenance; if locals complain about the condition of the roadways, officials can always point to Washington and the myriad strings attached to federal grants. In a federal system where states are truly in charge of local matters, there would be no question as to whom the citizen should complain about high taxes and poor roads.

To the extent that Mr. Faber sees a federal BAC standard as innocuous because Congress must be permitted to call the piper's tune, I disagree. When operating within its proper sphere of delegated powers, Congress is supreme. However, the Constitution reveals no power delegated over state highway construction and maintenance. Hence, calling the tune in this case is nothing but a usurpation of power.

On Paleoconservatism

Although I agree with most of the ideas expressed in your round table "What Is Paleoconservatism?" (*Views*, January), I believe it is a serious mistake to call this persuasion by such a name. The liberals must love you for so hobbling yourselves. To the average person, the name brings one of two things to mind: either an image of a troglodyte or a high-sounding name that means nothing to them, and probably turns them off. During the fight for the Georgia flag in 1992-1993, a flag supporter from one of those traditional communities we say we represent—a town about as far from Athens and Atlanta as it is possible for a Georgia town to be—met me in Athens. I expressed my views with terms eloquently used by my traditionally minded friends of Athens and by magazines such as *Chronicles* and the *Southern Partisan*. Folks in his town, he informed me, would not even understand what I was talking about.

My friend's comment points out the most serious weakness in the paleo position: We are not heard or understood by the people who should be our strongest supporters. We have been reduced to irrelevance in the decisionmaking of the American regime. Pat Buchanan's showing in the recent presidential election—about 0.4 percent of the overall vote, or about one out of every 250 votes—is an approximate gauge of our strength. Sometimes, I think many in our camp rather like the isolation—from our enlightened perch we look down on the unlettered, unknowing masses in perfect confidence that, if they would just listen to us, they would be far better off. They do not listen to us, first, because our message has never even reached most of them—saturated, as they are, by the mainstream media and the American regime every minute of their waking lives. And second, they do not listen to us because we often do not speak their language, even when we do manage to break through the regime's monopoly of thought and communication. They do not understand us. We do not connect with their daily concerns. We are "paleos"; they are real people.

We desire the return of our local communities, our states, our nation, our entire Western civilization, to the guiding principles that form the bedrock of our greatness. A small band of knowing, intelligent, determined people can keep the flame burning until it rekindles the old spirit and the old understanding among nations. That is how many of us see our role. At the same time, many of us hold out the hope that our society can return, at least partially, to the "permanent things" in our own day, or at least within the next half-century. We know our society desperately needs to do so—the sooner, the better, for it and for ourselves.

To do so, however, there must a be wide dispersion of our way of thinking. In short, we must break out of our cocoon and communicate with the masses. Donald Davidson knew that the intellectual, the artist, the leader, must be a part of his community; the works of intellectuals should be familiar to the everyday citizen. Such an articulation of a very commonsense principle was enunciated in the 1850's by William Gilmore Simms of South Carolina, who, in his Social Moral Lectures, urged his fellow Southerners to emulate the virtues and the wisdom of Periclean Athens, where the fine arts and the words of statesmen were a part of the life of the community.

Our society can be raised to the standards of our historic civilization only if the old virtues are reinstilled in a sufficiently large number of our leading citizens—including educators, journalists, professionals, businessmen, and politicians. This will be accomplished not by esoteric intellectual cliques—such as the name "paleoconservative" implies—but by reaching out to the millions of "Middle Americans" who long for a return of their societies to the old virtues that they still admire. They do not want a paleoconservative; they want a living, breathing person to whom they can entrust their future. Somehow, a way must be found to connect the *Chronicles* clerisy with the genius of the average American.

—William L. Cawthon, Jr.
Athens, GA

On the Draft

I was pleased to read Greg Kaza's review of the fruitless campaign to end draft registration ("Uncle Sam *Still* Wants You," *Vital Signs*, January). I remember well why Ronald Reagan reneged on his firm promise to end draft registration: Alexander Haig convinced him that Brezhnev's tanks would be stopped before Warsaw only by the terrifying knowledge that two million American youths were marching to their post offices to fill out cards.

In 1974, I cofounded the National Council Against Compulsory Service to fight back against those who wanted to reinstitute the draft or, in its place, compulsory national service. It was easy to recruit a half-dozen libertarians to serve on its board. We naively thought that we could get a bunch of antiwar lefties to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

join us. Wrong. The lefties were against compelling America's youth to go forth to fight capitalism's foreign wars; at a deeper level, however, they also believed that society had the power to confiscate a couple of years of the same youths' lives by imposing mandatory national service to assist the oppressed, poor, downtrodden, and other victims of the capitalist social order. Fortunately—not much thanks to our efforts—the nation never did get saddled with this particularly virulent form of involuntary servitude. Let's hope we never do.

—John McClaughry
Concord, VT

On NATO and Europe

The British Conservative Party's defense policy remains frozen in a time warp as we head toward a general election in the United Kingdom this spring. The party is opposed to the European Reaction Force on the grounds that it undermines NATO and the alliance with America. For a party that has been in opposition, it seems to have done very little fundamental thinking about defense and foreign policy. It has never questioned the purpose of NATO in the way that Srdja Trifkovic did in "NATO, R.I.P." (*The American Interest*, January), and the concept of Britain having its own independent defense and foreign policy free of supranational constraints seems alien to it. When I attended the Conservative Party conference fringe meeting on defense last October, the emphasis was very much on the quality of equipment available to the Armed Forces and Labour's failures in this area. There was no attempt to question what functions the Armed Forces should perform in the post-Cold War world, what our national interests should be in defense and foreign policy, what conflicts our nation might encounter—and whether we really should be involved in such conflicts, nor whether we should continue membership in the United Nations or NATO. I was told by one delegate that NATO was necessary because we may have to suppress a neo-Nazi uprising in Germany!

The fringe meeting on foreign policy was just as disheartening. The Conservative Party remains committed to foreign aid and maintaining the Department for International Development. We also still seem to think that the United Nations can be made to work better, despite the thoroughly subversive role it has exercised in world affairs since 1945.

I would urge Dr. Trifkovic not to be too enthusiastic about any European Reaction Force, because its eventual aim is to be the nucleus of a European Army underpinning a country called "Europe." Conservatives should strive for the abolition of NATO and the United Nations, and the consequent restoration of independent national control of defense and foreign policy for all nations.

—Allan Robertson
London, England

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

TEDDY KENNEDY, the famed moral exemplar, read his former senatorial colleague John Ashcroft the riot act during confirmation hearings.

Ashcroft was extreme; his constitutional understanding of gun control was "radical." The senatorial face grew flush—presumably with anger, since it was a bit early in the day for more potent stuff.

Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware was likewise ticked. Why, this man—this *Ashcroft*—had given an interview to *Southern Partisan*, the very existence of which was offensive to "20 million African-Americans." He was assuming 20 million African-Americans so much as knew the interview existed—a questionable point, to say the least.

And there was Sen. Barbara Boxer of California. She wasn't going to vote for "someone . . . so far out of the mainstream that it divides the country"—the mainstream as defined, evidently, by Senator Boxer. On to New York Sen. Charles Schumer. Ashcroft was "one of the most outspoken anti-choice crusaders in the country."

Confirm the guy? You had to wonder, toward the end of the hearings, how Ashcroft's erstwhile Democratic colleagues had managed all these years not to rend him limb from limb.

Of course, when you've watched Washington politics a while, you know what is going on. "Talking for Buncombe" has been a local habit, at least since 1820, when Rep. Felix Walker of North Carolina, during the Missouri Compromise debate, gave birth to the term. Ashcroft's inquisitors on the Judiciary Committee were talking to their own private Buncombes, hoping to be heard, as no doubt they were.

Their actions further defaced politics—the process by which men in society seek (theoretically, of course) the good. But another point arises: The right side of the street always gets defaced, while the left side normally escapes damage.

Republicans and conservatives hardly ever—maybe never—do to Democrats and liberals what is done routinely to them: eviscerate a president's nominee—just stand right there and publicly disembowel him, as happened with Ashcroft, Robert Bork, and Clarence Thomas. Bill Clinton's nominees—from the fiercely "pro-choice" Donna Shalala on down—received dignified treatment. I can think of no instance in which Republicans made mendacious charges resembling those leveled at Ashcroft—even in the case of the really awful and unqualified Jocelyn Elders, whom Clinton ultimately bounced as surgeon general.

You can look at this performance gap in two ways: Republicans are wimps, or Republicans are the lonely defenders of a mostly vanished civility in public life. In modern politics, wimpery and civility are sometimes barely distinguishable. The civil tend toward what resembles wimpery.

Civility involves, much of the time, the biting of tongues. You don't tell a jerk what a jerk he is, simply because you weren't brought up to do so. Senator Kennedy is likely the biggest jerk in public life—an immoralist who loves to preach morals; a rich man who exalts his commitment to the poor without divesting himself of his immoral money. Does a gentleman, even so, say the obvious—that Ted should be horsewhipped? No, he doesn't. This is because one doesn't want to climb down to that level—a pretty far drop, in all conscience.

However, failing to climb down for a good roll in the gutter exacts a certain cost. You have to hope those watching get the high-minded message: "I'm not going to engage in that sort of thing." They may get it; they may not—which is more likely in the age of mass democra-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cy, when anyone who can drive a car is pronounced fit to exercise the franchise.

There's a wonderfully enlightening chapter in William Alexander Percy's *Lanterns on the Levee*—a too-much-neglected work of literature—concerning the downfall of Mississippi's gentlemanly U.S. Sen. LeRoy Percy (the author's father) at the hands of the distinctly non-gentlemanly James Vardaman. The voters—and this was 1912—didn't want a gentleman; they wanted one of their own. And they got him.

What does this prove? That the gentle Percys are ever destined to give way before the no-holds-barred Vardamans? Not really. The Vardamans won long ago. Yet even today, Republicans somehow have a better knack than Democrats at retaining personal dignity, and a better grasp of the reasons why, in the Age of Clinton, dignity is indispensable.

Even when it looks like wimpery, you don't want this condition to endure. You want a little respect, a little civility. At the same time, you hope Republicans can come to understand the stakes in the ongoing confirmation wars. As soon as the next Supreme Court vacancy comes up, Democrats are going to scream bloody murder about any nominee with the slightest taint of conservative blood—the kind of nominee George Bush says he will propose. We'll hear of racism. We'll hear of nefarious places where the nominee has made speeches. You can count on his intention of sending poor women to the alleys for coat-hanger abortions.

Something else can't be counted on, but it can be hoped. A well-loved Episcopal bishop—a conservative—once put it well. Of his revisionist adversaries, he prayed: "Lord, let them go too far." Let them show, in other words, what bad guys they are, for all their fine talk. Then let the people judge. Let the truth—whose tones are resonant—be heard loudly, clearly.

—*William Murchison*

THE PRESIDENTIAL PARDON of Marc Rich, the Belgian-born, naturalized American billionaire financier and fugitive who has renounced his U.S. citizenship and fled to Switzerland to avoid multi-million-dollar tax liability, evoked incredulous responses from many. Said New York's Mayor Rudy Guiliani, "When I first heard about it, my—my reaction was, quite honestly, no. No. It's a mistake. It must—they must be confused with somebody else. No president would pardon a fugitive. No president would pardon someone on the FBI's top number one list of fugitives for a long, long time. No president would ever pardon someone where the charges are still open that he traded with Iran during the hostage crisis. I mean, what president would do that?" The President who did, of course, was William Jefferson Clinton. Rich had been involved in what NBC news called "a complex oil scam exploiting America's energy crisis in the early 80's"—from which he made a profit of $100 million. And while 52 Americans were held hostage, Rich's company allegedly made a killing trading with Iran, in violation of the U.S. embargo. Then he allegedly failed to pay any taxes on the profits.

Rich, one of only six people on the FBI's Most Wanted list, was still pardoned by President Clinton. As the *Wall Street Journal*'s John Fund told Chris Matthews on CNBC's *Hardball*, "We have had pardon problems in the past, Chris, but we have never had people like [Democratic party fundraiser] Beth Dozoretz—and I can tell you, [newly designated chairman of the Democratic Party] Terry McAuliffe . . . involved in giving advice to people on pardons in early January. We have never had that before in American history." What Fund was implying, what internet news sites and some of the tabloids were beginning to speculate, and what two Congressional investigations in both the House and the Senate were looking into, was whether Marc Rich's ex-wife Denise—a prominent contributor to the Democratic Party—aided and abetted by Dozoretz and McAuliffe, had managed to funnel hundreds of thousands of dollars of Marc Rich's ill-gotten gains to both the Democratic Party and the Clinton Presidential Library, in exchange for the pardon. Denise Richards quickly pled the Fifth, and by mid-February, Congress and the new attorney general, John Ashcroft, were taking steps to grant her immunity, to gain further information.

If it was true—as virtually every American suspected—that Clinton had promised the pardon in exchange for contributions, it would be the clearest case of Clintonian audacity yet. One strange soul, Sen. Arlen Specter—who, during the Clinton impeachment trial, had (making a strange and utterly irrelevant allusion to Scottish law) voted "not proven"—suggested that it might be appropriate to impeach Clinton once again, stripping him of his remaining federal emoluments: his pension, Secret Service protection, and office allowance. The odds of that happening, of course, are slim.

But the Rich fiasco—and Clinton's contemporaneous pardoning of dozens of others, including his half-brother, his former business partner, and an extraordinary collection of miscellaneous miscreants, many of whom seemed to be directly connected either to him, his family, or powerful members of his political party—did focus new interest on the presidential pardoning power. Could this have been what the Framers had in mind? The Constitution is a bit opaque. It provides merely that the President "shall have Power to Grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment." It sets no standards for the granting of pardons, and it imposes no fetters on the absolute discretion of the President. The *Federalist*, our most reliable guide to the original understanding of the Constitution, devotes only a couple of pages to pardons, but some passages are intriguing. Hamilton, in *Federalist* 74, writes that "the reflection that the fate of a fellow-creature depended on his *sole fiat* would naturally inspire scrupulousness and caution; the dread of being accused of weakness or connivance would beget equal circumspection, though of a different kind." Claiming that it was better to put the power of pardon in the hands of the single executive rather than requiring legislative concurrence (even in cases of treason), Hamilton concluded that "It is not to be doubted that a single man of prudence and good sense is better fitted, in delicate conjunctures, to balance the motives which may plead for and against the remission of the punishment than any numerous body whatever." But Hamilton believed that the Electoral College, indirect election of the president, and other safeguards against direct democracy that the Framers had built into the Constitution would give us a chief executive known for probity and good character. Hamilton was thinking of George Washington, of course, and he never met Bill Clinton. That sound you hear is, undoubtedly, Hamilton spinning in his grave.

—*Stephen B. Presser*

CARLA DEL PONTE'S talks in Belgrade with President Vojislav Kostunica

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Yugoslavia ended abruptly and acrimoniously on January 23. After an hour with Kostunica, an angry-looking Miss Del Ponte, the chief prosecutor of The Hague war-crimes tribunal, rushed past assembled journalists and refused to give a scheduled statement. Her "list of demands"—topped by the extradition of the former president, Slobodan Milosevic—did not sit well with Kostunica. He raised objections to secret indictments and the politicized work of the tribunal, condemning its "selective justice." He also pointed out that most indictments have been against Serbs, which "could be seen as the collective guilt of an entire people, despite the fact the tribunal formally insists on personalizing responsibility." Kostunica also asked Del Ponte what she intended to do about NATO's use of weapons laced with depleted uranium and invited her comments on new evidence that the alleged massacre of Albanian civilians in the village of Racak was, in fact, an elaborate setup.

This must have been tough on a woman who has grown accustomed to banging her fists and lecturing her Balkan interlocutors on what they should do to oblige her, how soon, and how enthusiastically. Kostunica's p.r. blitz continued the following day with a hard-hitting interview in the *International Herald Tribune*, in which he said that if Milosevic is to be tried on war-crimes charges, the trial should take place in a Yugoslav court. "If one wants to destabilize the situation in this country, one might behave the way Carla Del Ponte behaves," he said, adding that cooperation with her court would not be justified "by the Magna Carta or the U.S. Constitution."

Del Ponte's court is a political institution conceived in mischief by the Clinton administration, devoid of either legality or legitimacy. Its origins, its mission, and its *modus operandi* constitute a naked assault on the very concept of the rule of law. The Yugoslav war-crimes tribunal is a misnomer: It has proved to be neither a "tribunal"—a forum of impartial justice—nor is it concerned with "war crimes"—understood as gross violations of certain norms of war, regardless of the identity of culprits and victims.

It requires courage not to comply with The Hague—but politically, Kostunica is on far firmer ground than most observers realize. The tribunal "exists" only because it is politically and financially supported by the major Western powers, primarily the United States. The new administration in Washington is markedly unenthusiastic about it, and for good reason: It is difficult to support a transnational judicial body at The Hague, while at the same time arguing against the proposed International Criminal Court.

The Europeans, on the other hand, remember that the tribunal was not their invention, but a concession to Washington for European refusal to bomb the Bosnian Serbs eight years ago. For the time being, they still tell their diplomats to press the matter in Belgrade, and the diplomats do a good job of sounding serious and committed to promoting this quasi-court. But without pressure from Washington, Europe is unlikely to put much wind in Del Ponte's sails.

Kostunica has rightly sensed that the political consequences of saying "no" to Del Ponte are easier to bear than the loss of sovereignty and dignity that "full cooperation" would entail. In the short term, he will face a certain amount of unpleasantness, mixed with attempts to bribe Yugoslavia with money that has not even been promised. His nerves will be tested. The long-term result of saying "no" will be pure profit, as there are no solid European interests at stake.

Del Ponte is aware of this, and she is in a hurry to exact concessions, but Kostunica is a moral man, and therefore loath to make compromises on an issue of principle. He knows that his credibility is being tested and that he can retain it only by sticking to his guns and rejecting The Hague's jurisdiction; it is also a matter of respecting the democratic will of his electorate. He could tell foreign diplomats: "You wanted democracy in Serbia: now you have it. Our people don't want your court."

Many Europeans and Americans would be content to see Del Ponte's outfit disbanded, but they dare not say so aloud—not yet, anyway. There would be no prospect of this happening if Belgrade caved in. Kostunica appears to be aware of this. As he stated in a message to The Rockford Institute's conference on U.S.-Yugoslav relations last November, The Hague Tribunal seeks to pave the way for a world tribunal to which all members of the United Nations would surrender their jurisdiction and their sovereignty.

This fact remains his strongest card with the Bush administration. If justice in the Balkans is important to Washington, then there can be no substantive objection to trials in Belgrade. Serbian courts are still being cleansed of the old guard, but even now they are paragons of legality compared to the procedure and administration of indictments at The Hague. The rules of evidence remain unclear to this day. The accused has no right to confront his accuser, making him guilty until proved innocent. The tribunal investigates, indicts, prosecutes, and renders sentence as a single body. It demands that arbitrarily named war criminals be physically delivered to The Hague. The model for The Hague Tribunal is not Nuremberg 1946, but Moscow 1938.

By refusing to succumb to this monstrosity, Kostunica will do more than save his country; he will also gain respect for the new Yugoslavia in the West. There are people on both sides of the Atlantic who understand that this is their fight, too.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

OBITER DICTA: After almost 18 years as *Chronicles'* editorial secretary, **Leann Dobbs** is leaving us with this issue. The most senior member of the staff of both the magazine and The Rockford Institute, Leann has long been the heart of *Chronicles*. We will miss her more deeply than words can express, and we wish her and her husband, **Jeff**, all the best in the future.

Our first poet this month is **Peter Hunt**, a widely published essayist and critic who sits on the editorial board of the *Chesterton Review*. His poetry has appeared in various journals and magazines.

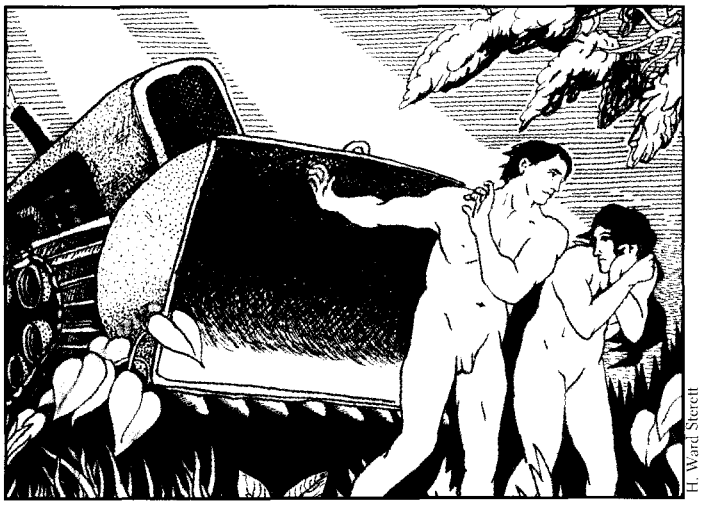
Our second poet is **Gail White**, who lives in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana. Her poetry has been published in numerous magazines across the country. Her latest book, *Landscapes With Women* (Singular Speech Press), is a collection of the works of four women.

Our cover photo was taken by **Tom Clabough**, who shoots both conventional and digital photography from his studio in the heart of Rockford, Illinois.

Our inside art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

Chronicles regular **Anatol Woolf** provided the illustration for this month's *Opinion*, "Antiquities of the Republic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Conservative War on Property

by Thomas Fleming

Perhaps it is a delusion, like snow blindness, caused by the tons of dirty snow shoved into my driveway by the city plows and the sun's annual disappearing act that drives even non-Scandinavians into melancholy and occasional fits of berserking frenzy, but I am beginning to be persuaded by our Chicago friend Tom Roeser that Rockford really is a constitutional laboratory, where every level of American government is running dirty experiments on their subjects.

The rats, as you may imagine, are beginning to tire. If it is not judges seizing power, or a city government sucking up to public contractors, it is county-board members working overtime to reward their friends in the real-estate development community. Several recent cases of eminent domain, particularly the "quick take" confiscation of much of Tom and Jan Ditzler's property for a road designed to assist development (an outrage chronicled by Scott P. Richert in this issue) have made this frozen wasteland a front line in the last battles over American property rights.

When government seizes a man's property, the victim and his friends are generally outraged. The rest of us, reading of the case in the newspaper, are apt to shake our heads between sips of coffee and mutter, "too bad," or "he could probably have handled this better," or even "the county needs that road." It hardly ever occurs to any of us that, in freely exercising their powers of eminent domain, governments are merely pushing to the limit the powers of confiscation that are implied by their power to tax property and income. "The power to tax," as John Marshall put it memorably, "is the power to destroy." A people that allows half its income to be seized annually for taxes without anything to show for the money except more government is in no position to protest if some portion of the other half of their income is taken with (albeit often inadequate) compensation.

In a regime of high taxes, it is clear, Raoul Berger's famous reference to property as the last human right stands in need of some qualification. Saddled with taxes and insurance payments and owing at least half of the value of their property to the real owner, the mortgage-holding bank, American homeowners have only the most tenuous grasp on their little pink houses.

Leftists, who brag about defending the common man, do not blink their eyes when the common man's property is taken from him. After all, property is theft, in Proudhon's words, and it developed (along with the family and social distinctions) as a corruption and deformation of an original state of equality. This is the burden of Engels' great work on *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*; and, one way or another, it underlies most left-liberal policies regarding families, taxation, and the welfare state. Men and women were once free and equal, now they are not—which is too bad—because patriarchal (European) male capitalists seized power and made themselves dictators.

It is an effective—though false—argument, and if it did not lead to the brutal inefficiencies of Marxist (and, increasingly, semi-Marxist) states, the theory of natural equality would probably be universally accepted instead of being confined, at least in its most radical form, to the academic ghetto that has been created to house the simpleminded and the inexperienced and to keep them away from really important things, like fast-food franchises.

Apart from whining about the evils of communism, so-called "conservatives" do not seem to know how to defend private property. Almost inevitably, they turn to the highly speculative theories of John Locke and his predecessors (Hobbes, Selden,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Grotius, and ultimately Epicurus) and declare that private property is a "natural right"—in other words, a theoretical claim derived from a hypothetical state of nature.

You see, the "conservative" holy men will tell you, once upon a time long, long ago when dinosaurs walked the earth, men and women lived on a free-and-easy basis of equality. Unfortunately, some wicked people took advantage of the situation by abusing their neighbors, and the wiser heads managed to persuade everyone to sacrifice some part of his natural rights and natural equality for the sake of peace and justice. In particular, they wanted to safeguard their property, and that is why "government" or "the state" exists partly, even primarily, to protect property rights. Natural rights do not, in this tradition, derive either from nature or (God forbid!) from the Divine Will. They exist only as the concluding proposition of a hypothetical syllogism of the type: If unicorns, before zoos were invented, once had a single horn, zoo keepers do not have the right to amputate the horn without giving the unicorn a hearing.

It should not take clever people such as Marx and Engels to spot the gaping holes in this argument. As the monarchist Sir Robert Filmer pointed out before Locke had written anything, it would be next to impossible to find total agreement for any such social contract, and even if the founders of a society were able to come to terms, they could not bind their descendants to abide by majority rule. Anarchists conclude from this that any individual is free at any time to repudiate government and go back to the state of nature ("Dogs run free, why not me?"), while Marxists have exploded the flimsy historical foundation for all traditional social institutions, including private property: If family and property are social inventions, they are neither divine nor natural and can be overthrown in the interest of promoting the true human equality that is everyone's birthright.

It is easy to see why "conservatives" have done such an inadequate job of defending property from the left. It is precisely the conservative heroes—the founders of classical liberalism—who gave the left its best weapon: the historical fantasy of natural equality and human rights. So when leftists demand 90 percent of a "rich" man's income in the form of taxes, some libertarians and classical liberals on the "right" will argue that all such taxation is wrong, but most "conservatives" will simply haggle over the rates, because ultimately they do not understand that property (like the family) is neither a social or historical invention nor an abstract right that depends upon a highly dubious theory of rights that few people in the history of the world have ever accepted.

Property, almost as much as motherhood and perhaps more than fatherhood, is a basic constituent of the human condition. Man is born to eat food and procreate and to own the things on which eating and procreation depends. Even the ancient Stoics went so far in theoretically justifying the satisfaction of natural necessities. But the naturalness of property is no mere theory. Contrary to the erroneous reports that Locke (and his predecessors) had read of tribal peoples in America, there is no known society where distinctions of power and the concept of "mine and thine" are completely unknown. In the most primitive societies, the tools and weapons a man makes belong to him and his; even the great apes show a certain possessiveness toward peculiar or useful things they have found, and human beings have universally developed that simple instinct into social institutions.

Personal possessions are one thing, a liberal (on the "right" or left) might say, but the fundamental property rights concern not spears and axes but land and houses. Obviously, a tribe that builds no permanent homes but follows the buffalo or caribou herd wherever it goes will develop a very imperfect conception of real estate and property rights; nonetheless, even migratory and stateless peoples, such as the famous Bushmen of the Kalahari, regard hunting grounds and watering holes as *their* property. They may not exercise an exclusive right to take water or hunt game, but they do have privileged access. An alien presenting a challenge to such privileges may be answered with violence.

In this sense, the sovereign rights that nations claim over their territory are merely an extension of the property rights enjoyed by family and clan, in much the same way that the concepts of sovereignty and political authority are themselves an outgrowth of the primitive family's power to govern itself and its members.

"Clans owning land? This is not private property at all!" exclaim the "conservatives," because "property rights are not held by groups but by individuals." For the past two or three hundred years, perhaps, and under the Roman Empire, but in the length and breadth of human history, landed property is more likely to be found in the hands of families, extended kindreds, and even tribes. The conservative liberal jurist, Sir Henry Sumner Maine, was essentially correct in his great book *Ancient Law*, where he outlined a broad historical transition from status to contract. In many early societies, including archaic Athens and republican Rome, a man's farm goes automatically to his heirs, and while he may write a will disposing of various things he has made or acquired in the course of a lifetime, he cannot alienate the family's land by willing it to a stranger. Under most circumstances, he may not even defy custom by excluding a lawful heir or by displaying his partiality to a younger son.

Our one-sided emphasis on *individual* property rights may well turn out to be a weak point in the liberal (including the "conservative") approach. Here in Rockford, we insist on referring to "Tom Ditzler's property," though he thinks of it as his family home, the castle to be defended against the outside world.

This was the understanding that most Americans had of their land and houses in the founding era. Land was more than a commodity to be bought and sold at an agreed-upon price. It was the home place, Christopher Lasch's *Haven From a Heartless World*, the place where the memories, perhaps even the graves of lost members were tended. The demand for an amendment protecting property against search and seizure was not made by Lockean individualists who wanted to protect the rights of rum smugglers or dope smokers. British revenue officers were invading family businesses—shops and houses—in search of contraband; this was a violation of a fundamentally British sense of the home as an inviolable refuge from its enemies in and out of government. Reverence for the family home is deeply planted in the character of European man, and it is as strongly attested by ancient Greeks as by our Germanic, Celtic, and Slavic ancestors who destroyed classical civilization.

Property and status, whatever St. Augustine may have believed, are not only natural to man but part of the Divine Plan. Adam and Eve had a home place: They called it Eden. The only state of nature worth talking about is human nature, and (apart from the protections offered by the deteriorating Constitution) the only solid basis for property rights is to be found in the laws of nature and of nature's God.

c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Turner's Watercolour: "Holy Island—Northumberland"

by Peter Hunt

A steep, sharp, rocky shore, a low cliff-side
Pale-gold with sunlight cutting down from skies
In tumult on the fringes of a storm around
The Holy Island. Castle towers loom
Broken, massive, rough, their colour paled
By North-Sea winds and ghostly, silver light,
While shadowing the further shore, and over
Blue-black sea, the upper realms of Eastern sky
Are opaque with penitential blue
Of priestly stoles, and sea and sky converge.
Like a miracle this shore seems warm,
Haloed in a sunstruck peace. Yet this
Is no calm bay where boats may beach, but wind-torn
Solitude, to which supplies are brought
To bare survivors, blessed this day by light
That marks two worlds—of haven, and of storm,
But huddling close in human warmth, and hurrying
To their home. The sailors rocking in their boat,
A family-cluster wading to the shore,
A group shin-deep in shore-line water circled
By the swirling, white-gold-crested waves,
(The lovely, dangerous lace that laps and sweeps
Into the Isle); a father with child in arms,
A woman and a child who wait above:
All are aware of maelstrom near at hand.
Far off, a steam-ship moves away as though
It hurried on to trade, and ports and cities
Less enchanted, anxious to have done
With Lindisfarne, lonely ruins, rocky isle
Long bereft of monks and kings. And far up on
The left and on the heights, the priory
Steeple's glimpsed, its cross the sign of Aidan's
Zeal, who poured the oil and calmed the sea,
And founded Lindisfarne, making clear the paths
Of many who embarked for distant points, and
Of Cuthbert, the bishop who as hermit
On the tiny isle of Farne prayed springs from rocky
Floors, and gained his bread from barley, sown
Unseasonally when other crops had failed.
What did they think of the sea, those saints
And cloistered, patient scholars, those roving
Teachers driven by desire to spread the Word?
Did they ever fear the salt-sway fever of it,
Or feel in its flood the everlasting swell
And surge of Him they served, feasting on it
As they, Celt and Saxon, feasted on their songs
In days before Iona's fire had struck their tongues
And made this island, bathed in Turner's gold,
The burning ruby centre of their zeal?

DICTATIONS

"The Only Thing That Matters"

Tennyson's Northern Farmer, who did not want his son marrying for love, took a lesson from his horse's hoof-beats:

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.

Conservatives, repeating that refrain ever since, stake everything on the third term of Locke's trinity of life, liberty, and property. But what did Locke mean by *property*? We think of real property and personal property, of course, but there are also chemical properties, and Anglicans used to invoke a Divine Being "whose property is always to have mercy." And what about such related words as "proper" and "propriety"?

All of these words are derived from the Latin *proprius*, "one's own." Hence, property is that which belongs to one, either in the sense of ownership or in the sense of an intrinsic quality. Classical liberals often speak as if the right to buy or sell a property were an essential part of the definition. But fungible is precisely what property is (or rather was) not. When Locke defines the function of government, he says that people unite "for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I shall call by the general name—property." In this context, "estate" might mean several things: property in general; the sum total of properties and monies, debts and credits, which a man leaves behind after his date; and landed property in particular. Even in commercial England, however, the estates one would think of first were real property—that is, the lands and buildings that conferred identity and prestige.

Though estates were bought and sold in 17th-century England, they were primarily conceived of as inalienable by those who inherited them and were to be passed down to heirs according to strict laws of succession. Estates might be further entailed, sharply curtailing the proprietor's right to dispose of them as he saw fit. On the other hand, though a proprietor might not easily be able to sell a particular "property," he could "bid defiance to the crown" if it sent petty officials knocking at his door to collect taxes or search for contraband. The invasion of this essential property right sparked the American Revolution and led to the drafting both of the Declaration of Independence and the Fourth Amendment.

Americans long ago traded in this precious right for the trivial right to buy and sell. Tennyson's farmer was thoroughly modern—"new style," as he is called—and he can do anything he likes with his property. He can buy and sell and disinherit his next of kin as if he were not his own son:

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—
Proputty, proputty, proputty—canter an' canter awaäy.

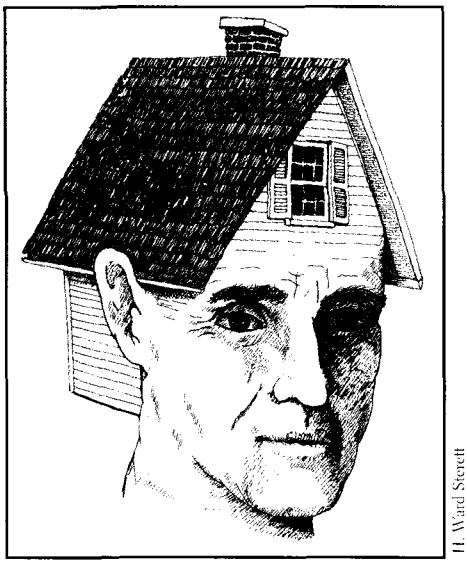
—Humpty Dumpty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Keeps!

A Christian Defense of Property

by Scott P. Richert



H. Ward Sterett

Tom Ditzler, a veteran, buys 30 acres of rural farmland. For 30 years, he and his wife, Jan, live there, rearing two children, Cassandra and Christina. Tom comes to know the contours of his property by heart—the creek that runs across his land, the wetlands surrounding the creek, the hills and woods that rise up from the creek bed toward his house. Though legally blinded when a mortar misfired during an Army training exercise, Tom can walk his property without assistance. He can even drive a truck through portions of it.

Then, one day, everything changes. County officials notify him that they are going to build a road across his land. In the name of economic progress, they will take 17 of his 30 acres through eminent domain. The road will cut him off from the creek, from the wetlands, from the hills. It will run right past his house, less than 100 feet away. The world that he has known for 30 years—the property that has restored a measure of the freedom that he lost along with his sight—will suddenly become much smaller.

A young black jazz musician lives with his grandmother in a house that his family has owned for many years. In a neighborhood that would politely be called "marginal," Henry Hamberlin and his grandmother have kept up their home with a quiet sense of dignity. The woodwork has been immaculately kept, and the original gas lamps still work.

Then a federal judge comes along and declares that the local public schools have "raised discrimination to an art form." One of his solutions? Increase taxes dramatically to pay for the construction of elaborate—and expensive—schools in historically black neighborhoods. But Henry's house stands in the way of rectifying racial wrongs. The school district cannot take his home, so the city begins eminent-domain proceedings. The city offers him a fraction of what it is worth, basing its value on similar—but less well kept—homes in the neighborhood. Where Henry's house once stood, the support staff at Ellis Fine Arts Academy now park their cars.

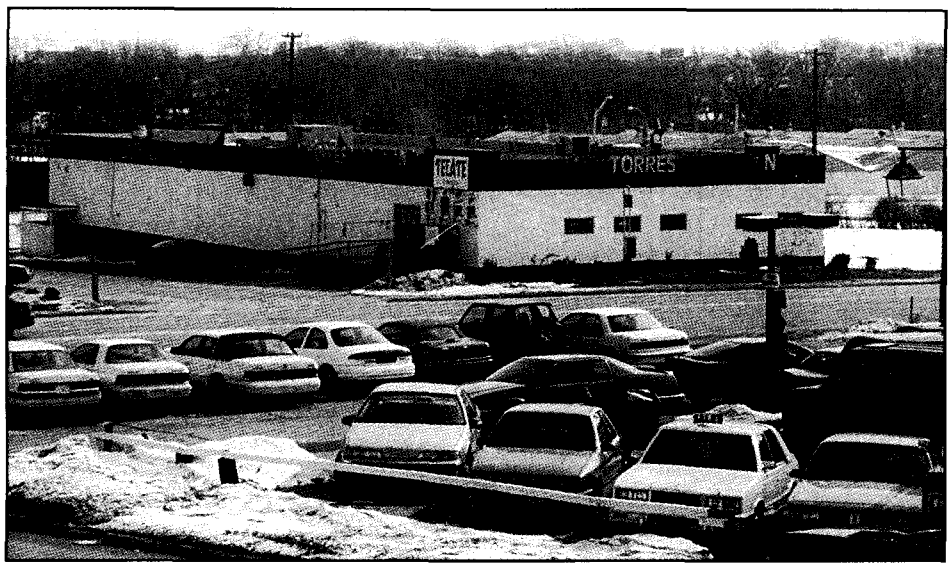
A sanitary-sewer district notifies residents in a rural area of the county that it will be using eminent domain to gain permanent easements across the front of their property. A sewer trunk is coming through to service a subdivision proposed by a wealthy contributor to local political campaigns. Although the sewer could be run through farmland on the opposite side of the road—and the owners of the farmland have no objection—officials from the sanitary district privately admit that they want to lay the sewer on the residential side of the road in order to make it possible for the city to annex the property, even though the sanitary district has no official ties to the city government. Without the sewer running through their front yards, these property owners might eventually end up as a pocket of the county surrounded by the city—with lower taxes and separate services.

An Hispanic family buys a building in a run-down part of town. Since the riots of the late 60's, the area has been largely dead. Now, a revival of sorts is taking place, led by the Torreses, who convert the building into a Mexican market. It is the only grocery store of any size in that quarter of the city, and thus enjoys a mixed clientele—whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

Then a local developer commissions a study to determine the feasibility of building a large grocery store where the Torres Market currently stands. After several years, he finally finds a

Scott P. Richert is the executive editor of Chronicles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



H. Ward Sterett

The City of Rockford is using eminent domain to help a private developer acquire the land on which the Torres Market sits.

chain willing to move into the area. Rather than approaching the Torreses and offering to buy their store, the developer goes to the city government, which begins eminent-domain proceedings on the Torres property and a half-dozen others. Once the city gains title to the Torres Market, it will hand it over to the developer, who will have eliminated the only competition for his chain supermarket.

I could multiply examples of eminent domain almost *ad infinitum* while never once leaving the boundaries of the City of Rockford, Illinois, and Winnebago County. In fact, the four examples that I have just cited have all taken place within the past *two years* in an area of the city and county no larger than a couple square miles—and for every case that I have mentioned, at least a half-dozen other eminent-domain proceedings have occurred in that tiny corner of our community.

The language of the Fifth Amendment seems so innocuous—or, rather, it seems a positive good, designed to protect us: "No person shall . . . be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." But how do we get from there to the Torres Market?

Traditionally, in order to exercise the power of eminent domain, government has had to show, first, that it was taking the land in order to use it for a public good; and second, that there was no other parcel of land that could be used for this particular project. When we hear the words "eminent domain," most of us probably think of roads and canals. While the Ditzlers' case involved the use of an Illinois state law called "Quick Take," under which municipalities can seize a man's property first and negotiate a price later, it was still a fairly straightforward example of the use of eminent domain for a so-called public good. Of course, as with any public good, some will benefit more than others from the road that now runs across the Ditzlers' farm: Property records show that wealthy and politically connected developers own most of the land on both sides of the road. Had it been rerouted to run up an existing road a few hundred feet to the east, the developers would have been shut out.

Henry Hamberlin's case is also an example of a fairly traditional use of eminent domain. After roads, public buildings (especially schools) probably account for most of the instances of eminent domain. The irony is that a black family lost its ancestral home in order to rectify years of supposed discrimination against blacks. The "public good" in this case was definitely not a private one.

In the last two examples, however, things start to look gray. While a plausible argument can be made that sanitary sewers are a public good, the people through whose yards the sewer is being run are receiving the benefit only incidentally: They will be hooked up to the sewer (partly at their own expense) because the law says that the sewer is too close for them not to be hooked up. But the real point of the sewer is to allow a new subdivision to be built in order to enrich a developer. How, exactly, is that a public good?

And what about the Torres Market? In the other cases I have cited, private citizens have benefited (or been hurt) in the name of the public good, but in each case, the land taken by eminent domain remained in the hands of government—a condition that seems to be implied in the Fifth Amendment clause "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." But when the City of Rockford acquires the Torres property, it will immediately hand it over to a private developer. How, then, can the use of eminent domain be justified?

The answer is simple: If eminent domain can only be employed to take land for a public use, then all the city has to do is expand the definition of "public use." Charles Box, our outgoing mayor, claims that the southwest quadrant of Rockford needs a full-service grocery store, and he is probably right. He also believes that the Torres Market is not large enough to serve all the residents of the area, and that may be true. But even granting the mayor's arguments, how can they possibly justify taking land from one private owner and handing it over to another?

About a year ago, shortly after the City of Rockford announced that it was initiating eminent-domain proceedings against the Torreses, I appeared on a local TV talk show with Barbara Richardson (the city's director of community development at that time). When the conversation turned to the city's attempts to confiscate the Torres Market and other properties, Miss Richardson explained that she believed in a very expansive use of eminent domain: "If you believe that government has any role in economic development, then you must believe that government can do whatever is necessary in order to facilitate economic development." Even, apparently, redistributing private property.

Rockford has not been alone in expanding the use of eminent domain. Detroit pioneered the concept almost 20 years ago, when it condemned the entire Poletown section of the city and handed the property over to General Motors for use as the site of a new automobile plant. More recently, the Institute for Justice, a Washington, D.C.-based conservative legal foundation, has represented clients in similar cases in both Atlantic City and Pittsburgh.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But the seeds of this expanded use of eminent domain were there from the beginning. The construction of roads and canals (and, later, railroads and the Interstate Highway System) was not an unadulterated public good, and not simply for the reasons that Bill Kauffman outlines in his book, *With Good Intentions? Reflections on the Myth of Progress in America*. In fact, whenever eminent domain was used to procure the land for a road or a canal, someone disproportionately reaped the benefits from it. For most projects that truly benefited the public at large, eminent domain was not used—for instance, to construct roads from rural areas into towns, so that farmers could bring their crops and livestock in for sale. Instead, the farmers themselves constructed those roads, and they did not even charge tolls.

At the time of the American founding, this use of eminent domain made perfect sense; the Framers of the Constitution, after all, were mercantilists, concerned more with the wealth of nations than with the wealth of private citizens. Anything that could (in President Clinton's hackneyed phrase) "grow the economy" contributed to the wealth of the nation. Still, the Framers would never have countenanced the use of eminent domain to take property from one citizen in order to give it to another. It took the development of capitalism—specifically, state capitalism—before government could come to identify a private good so completely with the public good.

When Barbara Richardson expressed her fondness for eminent domain, she was speaking not as a socialist, but as a state capitalist. Miss Richardson truly believes in private enterprise; during her tenure in Rockford, she devoted much of her efforts to encouraging the founding and growth of small businesses. But for her, and for other state capitalists, property is nothing more than a commodity. As long as we properly compensate the owner, why should government not take property by eminent domain and hand it over to someone else, who will use it with greater economic efficiency?

Why indeed? One of the reasons that property owners have found it so hard to get up the will to fight eminent-domain cases in recent years is that this idea of property as simply a commodity has become the prevailing view, even among—or perhaps, *especially* among—the defenders of private property. I once heard James Bovard begin a speech by declaring that the most important quality of property is the ability to sell it. His point, of course, was that government regulation often infringes upon this ability. As I glanced around the roomful of libertarians, I noticed them nodding their heads vigorously in agreement. But while his statement may be true *in the limited confines of a market setting*, another quality is far more important, because it relates to the whole of human existence, not merely its market aspects. *Contra* Bovard, the most important quality of property is the ability to *keep* it. Today, this quality is even more endangered than the ability to sell it.

The economic security that comes from owning one's land and home free and clear, the rootedness that comes from living in the same place over a long period of time, the potential for personal and community self-sufficiency that such rootedness provides—all of these have no value when property is viewed simply as a commodity, because they can be assigned no value by the marketplace. And yet these effects of property ownership provide the greatest possible protection against economic and political centralization—and the loss of freedom which accompanies it. That is why those who love liberty must first defend property.

> To regard property as merely a commodity is a form of consumerism, a spiritual disease which is anti-materialist and, therefore, anti-Christian.

For Christians, property can never be merely a commodity. It is, rather, an extension of our personality, as much a part of us as our wives and children. As Eastern Orthodox Bishop Kallistos Ware points out, *we* are the true materialists, because, by acknowledging the Incarnation of Christ, we recognize the importance and dignity of the material world, and our integration within it. "The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). To regard property as merely a commodity is a form of consumerism, a spiritual disease which is anti-materialist and, therefore, anti-Christian.

But consumerism is the religion of the day, and the apostles of *Homo economicus*, both socialist and capitalist, want us to be ashamed to view ourselves as anything other than consumers or to view our property as anything more than a commodity. Business cycles flatten out and marketplaces function more smoothly when we all act like good automatons, in accordance with supposed economic laws. When we let ourselves be ashamed at having any loyalties that are deeper than our ties to democratic capitalism, we become unable to defend our property as ours—for keeps—and government and developers can put a

Scott P. Richert

Ellis Fine Arts Academy stands where Henry Hamberlin's house once stood.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

H. Ward Sterett

Tom and Jan Ditzler survey Winnebago County's destruction of their land.

monetary value on something that should be as invaluable as a family member, or one of our limbs.

When he wrote one of his finest poems, "Do Not Be Ashamed," Wendell Berry was thinking not simply of property rights but of the growth of a broader political and economic totalitarianism. Still, his words are appropriate here:

> You will be walking some night
> in the comfortable dark of your yard
> and suddenly a great light will shine
> round about you, and behind you
> will be a wall you never saw before.
> It will be clear to you suddenly
> that you were about to escape,
> and that you are guilty: you misread
> the complex instructions, you are not
> a member, you lost your card
> or never had one. And you will know
> that they have been there all along,
> their eyes on your letters and books,
> their hands in your pockets,
> their ears wired to your bed.
> Though you have done nothing shameful,
> they will want you to be ashamed.
> They will want you to kneel and weep
> and say you should have been like them.
> And once you say you are ashamed,
> reading the page they hold out to you,
> then such light as you have made
> in your history will leave you.
> They will no longer need to pursue you.
> You will pursue them, begging forgiveness.
> They will not forgive you.
> There is no power against them.

When the City of Rockford came after the Torreses' market, the Torreses *did not* defend their property directly; instead, they cried "racism." Now, race may, in fact, have played a role, since the community development director, the mayor, and the developer who will receive the land are all black. But ultimately, race is irrelevant. What is relevant is that the Torreses have put their blood, sweat, and tears into their store, and their store has become a part of them.

When Winnebago County came after his land, Tom Ditzler *did* try to frame the debate in terms of property rights. Unfortunately, many well-meaning but misguided supporters tried to convince him that the way to keep his land was to talk about its "ecological significance" or the extremely remote possibility that the property contained Indian burial grounds. While both of those may be arguments for keeping the land pristine, they are not arguments for keeping it *his*. The reason for keeping it his is that there is no amount of money in the world that could possibly compensate Tom for government essentially taking his sight a second time, after he has spent 30 years regaining it (in a sense) through his intimate daily contact with his land. For a so-called public good, which is really just the private good of some politically well-connected developers, Tom Ditzler is being shut inside the box of his blindness.

I saw Tom a couple of months ago at a party for Suzanne Lee, a former radio talk-show host who had championed the cause of Tom and others like him. As he prepared to leave, Tom reminded Suzanne that, when she first came on the air, he used to call her program to take issue with some of the other callers, who he thought were running down the country for which he had sacrificed his sight. "I used to tell them that things weren't as bad as all that," he said. "But now," he conceded, "I'm afraid that they were right all along."

Tom may feel shame; but if he does, it should be for his country, not for himself. He may have lost, but he still fought the good fight. He tried to keep his property from becoming a commodity, interchangeable with the few paltry tax dollars that Winnebago County will deposit in his bank account once the quick-take case makes its way through the courts. But as I stood there listening to this veteran lament the fate of his country, I recalled a passage from Wendell Berry's book *Home Economics*, and I realized that America itself had lost something when Tom's land was taken from him. As Berry writes:

> Millions of people . . . who have lost small stores, shops, and farms to corporations, money merchants, and usurers, will continue to be asked to defend capitalism against communism. Sooner or later, they are going to demand to know why. . . . People, as history shows, will fight willingly and well to defend what they perceive as their own. But how willingly and how well will they fight to defend what has already been taken from them?

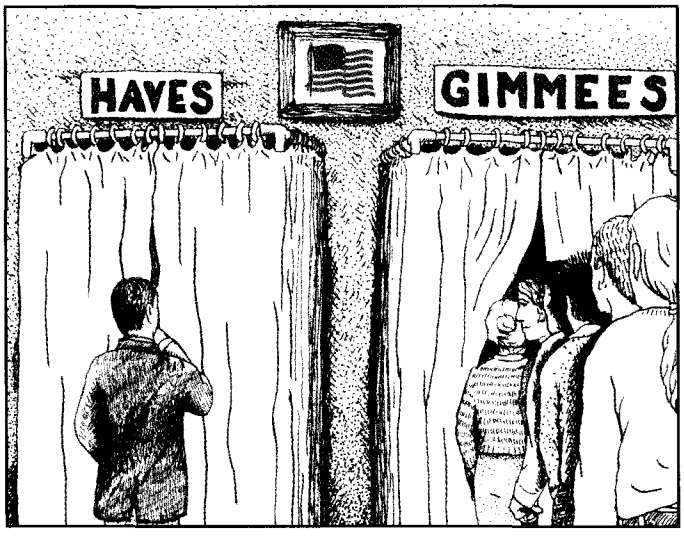
I do not know the answer to Berry's question, but I do know this: A regime that can make a patriot like Tom Ditzler feel betrayed by his country can no longer count on the unconditional loyalty of its citizens.

C

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Civil Rights or Property Rights?

by Justin Raimondo



The interplay of race and economics in America has produced a new variant of political economy that we might call "multicultural capitalism," a system in which property is, for the most part, privately owned, but its ownership is conditional on the race, sex, and—in some cases—the sexual orientation of the owner. In the pursuit of the chimera of racial and sexual "equality," the old system that regarded private property as an inviolable right has been replaced by one in which certain classes are granted power by the state to override property rights and, in effect, to appropriate private property for themselves. "Oppressed minorities" in America are accorded all sorts of "rights" not enjoyed by ordinary folk. Affirmative action in education and employment, special protections via "hate crimes" legislation, the sympathetic attention of political and cultural elites: These are just the most luxuriously obvious perks of oppression, but they are merely fringe benefits for the aristocrats of the new victimological order. The foundation of their power is a virtual stranglehold over all economic activity under our civil-rights laws.

The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act marked the beginning of the end of private property in America. As one of the few senators who voted against it, Barry Goldwater, remarked during the debate on the bill: "I am unalterably opposed to discrimination of any sort, and I believe that though the problem is fundamentally one of the heart, some law can help, but not law that embodies features like these, provisions which fly in the face of the Constitution, and which require for their effective execution the creation of a police state."

Those words have a prophetic ring to them, especially in light of the victimological assault on the Denny's chain of restaurants. Beginning in 1993, Denny's management came under a concerted and relentless attack by private interest groups in league with the federal government, which initiated a series of lawsuits that eventually brought the company to its knees. In San Jose, California, several black teenagers were refused service unless they agreed to pay in advance. The next year, six Asian-Americans at Syracuse University visited a Denny's and claimed that they had to wait over 30 minutes for service, unlike white patrons. The Asian-Americans complained, leading to a ruckus in the restaurant, which eventually spilled out into the street. These incidents spawned lawsuits, which Denny's eventually settled, but that was not the end of it. On April Fool's Day, 1993 (the same day that the first suit was put to rest), six black Secret Service agents walked into a Denny's in Annapolis, Maryland, and claimed to have been subjected to blatant discrimination: The problem, it seems, was that they had to wait an hour for their orders to arrive. According to an account in the *Washington Post*, the delay was so prolonged that they were "in effect denied service"—on account of their race, of course. The *Post* cited Robin D. Thompson, one of the black agents, as claiming he "felt humiliated" by the incident.

What happened that day in Annapolis, when 21 Secret Service agents were *en route* to an appearance by President Clinton at the Naval Academy, is indicative of what Goldwater meant when he predicted that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 could not be enforced without establishing a police state. Every small action counted as evidence in this case. The black supervisor and a group of white agents sat together, while the six black agents sat at a separate table. The supervisor and the white guys were served, while the black agents looked on. They summoned a waitress to the table; she assured them that their food was on the way. The *Post* reported with a straight face that "White agents have told the Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, which is handling the agents' lawsuit, that the waitress rolled her eyes after turning to leave the black agents' table."

Justin Raimondo is the author, most recently, of An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So this is the real use of our "civil rights" laws, supposedly charged with protecting the rights of the "oppressed": as a bludgeon against a lowly waitress, who dared protest her humiliation at the hands of rude customers.

> The followers of Martin Luther King, Jr., succeeded where Lenin's heirs failed.

Denny's management denied the claims of the complainants. Steve McManus, senior vice president of Flagstar, Denny's parent company, pointed out that the large size of the party was the key factor in the delay. The black agents, it turned out, had taken their time ordering. "It's a service issue, not a discriminatory issue," McManus said. But in the surreal world of our civil-rights laws, there is no way to tell the difference. As Goldwater put it, this is "a matter of the heart," and there is no way to prove "discrimination" on any basis except by looking directly into someone's heart—and that is not possible. Under current law, however, it is the option of judges and juries, as well as government bureaucrats, and that is how we came to the nightmarish end of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream—in which the facial expression of a waitress is used as "evidence" of "discrimination." The subjectivity of this whole area of law is apparent: A delay in getting an order of hamburgers and fries is thought, by the black agents, to be "a classic case of bias," as agent Thompson put it—or, from the waitress's viewpoint, a classic case of b.s. It is all a matter of perception, not fact, and therein lies the danger. Unless judges and juries are mind readers, the behavior of an eye-rolling waitress must remain a mystery about which we can only speculate: Was she a dyed-in-the-wool racist, or had it been a long day, full of abusive customers who had subjected her to more than the usual dose of humiliation visited on service employees? The lawyers and judges of today pretend they can know, and so does the Justice Department, which thundered that the settlement reached in the previous case was only tentative and demanded an explanation from Denny's management. The class-action lawsuit filed by the six Secret Service agents was joined by thousands all across the nation, becoming the largest case in the history of public-accommodations law.

The first impulse of Denny's management was to fight back. Flagstar CEO Jerry Richardson defined the central issue when he asked, "If our African-American guests were mistreated, was it because of racism? I can't tell you. It's impossible to know what's in a person's heart." But pressure began to build as the victimology brigade took up the cry of "racism!" and the costs of fighting the battle mounted. Flagstar tried appeasement: In 1993, the company signed an agreement with the NAACP pledging to hire more minorities, patronize minority-owned suppliers, and set up a jointly operated customer complaint department. But this only whetted the appetite of the shakedown artists, who preferred cash to goodwill gestures. The key issue, according to the NAACP, was redress for past discrimination on the part of Denny's. At this point, with the whole weight of the Justice Department bearing down on it, pickets outside its restaurants, and editorialists hurling anathemas, Flagstar raised the white flag. As of December 1995, Denny's had been shaken down for $54 million paid out to some 295,000 plaintiffs and their lawyers. Why did Flagstar surrender? "I had to consider the cost of the litigation," explained Richardson, "which would have been astronomical even if we'd won every trial." And then there was the public-relations aspect of a prolonged trial: "Litigating was going to take years," Richardson said, "and you can't go for years being at war with a percentage of your customers." Exhausted by the relentless assault of the professional victimologists and their governmental co-conspirators, Flagstar got taken to the cleaners. It could have happened to any company in America.

The Denny's saga was only the most memorable in a long series of recent court cases in which the charge of "racism" is enough to doom a company to years of litigation and demonization in the liberal media, which is all too eager to provide a platform for any complaint of "discrimination." It is almost worse than useless to fight such cases: Given the cultural and political atmosphere, a legal "victory" can, in the long run, wind up costing a company more than a defeat.

Socialism is widely thought to have been defeated, both intellectually and politically, while a wave of free-market libertarianism is supposedly sweeping the globe. But if we look at the effectiveness of the civil-rights revolution in the economic realm, we can see that the followers of Martin Luther King, Jr., succeeded where Lenin's heirs failed. The 1964 Civil Rights Act, which forbade "discrimination" in housing, employment, and public accommodations, sounded the death knell of property rights in America and inaugurated the police state foreseen by Goldwater—an Orwellian enforcement apparatus geared toward the extension of the "discrimination" concept to encompass the importunate rolling of a eye.

"Non-discrimination" inevitably grew to mean minority preferences—i.e., affirmative action—since there is no way to measure a completely subjective concept such as "discrimination" except by running the numbers. Since we cannot read the mind of the accused and can only infer his motives, the only measure of a white employer's racial mindset comes from counting his black employees. Do the numbers reflect the demographics of the area in which the business is located? If not, then—obviously—"discrimination" is at work. Such is the Jacobin logic of civil-rights legislation, which enforces homogeneity in the name of diversity and elevates a whole class of human beings on the basis of their skin color—in the name of racial "equality." In effect, civil-rights legislation, if consistently enforced, must mean quotas, whether openly acknowledged or managed more discreetly.

When William F. Buckley, Jr., declaimed that it was time to concede on the issue of civil-rights laws, he said that he was unwilling to go to the barricades to defend the right of Lester Maddox not to serve a plate of pork chops to a Negro. But what about the rest of us, abandoned to the depredations of race-baiters and crusading victimologists? It was incredibly naive of Mr. Buckley and his colleagues at *National Review* to have imagined that the whole process would end with forcing the Lester Maddoxes of this world to mind their manners. In any case, this occurred, ultimately, not by force of law but because of the laws of the market.

Everyone wanted to cash in on a very lucrative racket, and the concept of "discrimination" was gradually extended to areas beyond race, religion, and sex. It was inevitable that the aspir-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing gay-rights movement would latch onto the rhetoric first popularized by Martin Luther King, Jr., and the black civil-rights movement. For opposing this extension of the civil-rights principle, conservatives are smeared as bigots, just as Goldwater was for voting "nay" on the first federal Civil Rights Act. Goldwater stood on principle, but today's conservatives do not have a leg to stand on: Having long ago conceded the validity of the "anti-discrimination" principle, they are helpless to limit its application—especially as social trends go against them.

The official establishment-conservative line is that the civil-rights movement was a good thing gone bad. Back in the old days, when St. Martin walked the earth, the civil-rights movement was supposedly a fight against state power. It was only later, after it was corrupted by the poverty pimps—the Jesse Jacksons, Al Sharptons, and other race-hustlers in league with urban Democratic party bosses—that the movement took the wrong road. This is unmitigated hogwash. The movement led by King and other more radical figures was the rallying point for the left in the 1960's precisely because it implied the overthrow of capitalism by elevating "civil rights" above property rights. It was only natural for the concept to be extended continually until it now seems almost infinitely elastic. The latest development is that the gay lobby, having long ago won the battle to secure its "civil rights" in the state of California, is now seeking to emulate San Francisco and other "progressive" cities by outlawing discrimination against "transsexuals"—castrati who, through the miracle of plastic surgery and regular hormone treatments, have managed to convince themselves and a growing number of legislators that they have made the transition from male to female. In San Francisco, these self-mutilated creatures are accorded all the "civil rights" granted to officially state-sanctioned victim groups—protection from "discrimination" in housing, employment, and public accommodations—and there is a move afoot to enact a similar law on the state level. Back in the 1970's, San Francisco passed its own comprehensive gay-rights legislation; then-Mayor Dianne Feinstein's doubts were overcome by gay lobbyists who assured her that it would not mean that companies would have to hire men who came to a job interview in drag. Today, it means precisely that, and the city's Civil Rights Commission is fully empowered to initiate legal action against the offending "homophobe." We are near the bottom of the slippery slope; is there any way to avoid falling into the pit?

If we are looking to what passes for the conservative movement for any leadership on this issue, we are bound to be disappointed. When I made this argument during a panel on the gay-rights question at *National Review*'s 1993 "Conservative Summit," I ran into the voluble opposition of my fellow panelist, David Horowitz, head of the Center for Popular Culture and a well-known neoconservative. Horowitz was outraged by my reference to "St. Martin Luther King" and the suggestion that, instead of praising this secular saint, we ought to be calling the whole civil-rights paradigm into question. "I can't let pass the remarks of Justin Raimondo, which were appalling to me, without a comment here," he thundered. "This country committed a great crime, not only against black people but against itself, in the institution of slavery, which is fully justified by the property rights that Justin Raimondo thinks will cover everything." Horowitz attacked as "garbage" the idea that "there's no difference between [King] and Louis Farrakhan or the contemporary radicals who have hijacked the civil rights and turned it for their radical agenda."

This is a typical argument from far-out leftists: The fact of slavery entails some kind of debt on those who had nothing to do with it. This, I thought at the time, was an odd appeal to make to conservatives—invoking the concept of collective guilt, similar to that visited on Germans born long after Hitler and the Third Reich went down in flames. The idea that King was a self-conscious radical who was surrounded by close advisors with links to radical organizations is acknowledged by his most sympathetic biographers. But Horowitz's guilt-tripping did not end there; he was just getting warmed up. He launched into a long tirade about how he thought it was a "disgrace" that "I go from conservative meeting to conservative meeting and see two or three black people in the audience and maybe a couple of Hispanics." It is all because of Pat Buchanan—his voice had by this time reached such a high pitch of righteous anger that it threatened to crack—and, if the GOP goes Buchanan's way, "then there's no future at all for the conservative movement in the Republican party."

The GOP, of course, did not go Buchanan's way, and there is still no future for the conservative movement in the Republican party. But, setting that aside, how will conservatives prevent the redistribution of wealth in the name of race, sex, and all-around "equality" if their alleged leaders insist we all worship at the altar of MLK? As long as conservatives pander to the political correctness that animates their worst enemies, the politics and culture of this country will inevitably be dragged to the left. (Someday soon, a "centrist" will be someone who wants to forge a legislative compromise on the issue of "transsexual rights.")

> The 1964 Civil Rights Act sounded the death knell of property rights in America and inaugurated the police state.

The civil-rights revolution effected a sea change not only in the realm of law but in the political culture; unless that change is reversed or ameliorated, the displacement of property rights by civil rights will become permanent and all-encompassing. Instead of talking about "empowering" minorities, the men and women of the right must challenge and roll back the advances that egalitarian ideology has made in their own ranks. Yes, Barry Goldwater was right about the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and conservatives desperately need to rediscover and reclaim the libertarian spirit that animated his principled dissent. The state cannot legislate the preferences and prejudices of its subjects without ultimately establishing a dictatorship. The right of free association, the right to enter into contracts, and the right to control and dispose of one's own private property—the very basis of all rights—are bedrock principles that must be defended by any conservative movement worthy of the name. If this be bigotry—and it is not, at least not in a sane world—then so be it. Under these circumstances, it is far better to be a "bigoted" freeman than a tolerant slave.

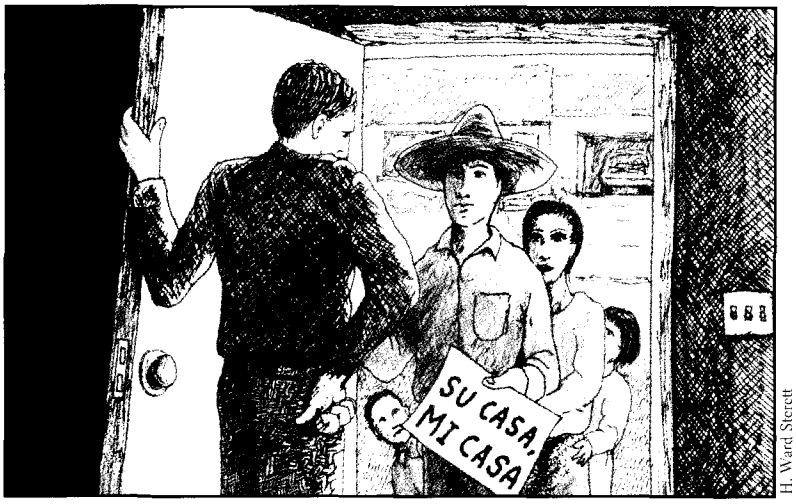
c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Virtues of Property

Restoring the Framers' Constitution

by Stephen B. Presser



H. Ward Sterett

Somewhere deep in their bones, Americans recognize that property is the paramount civil right—perhaps the paramount *human* right. Anyone who seriously studies American history, particularly that of the late 18th century, will discover that property, along with virtue, provided the foundation for American government. Indeed, the preservation of property is arguably the chief reason we have a federal Constitution.

Ask today's law students which concepts are most fundamental to American law and life, and they will tell you "equality and democracy"—even though most of them are upper-middle-class people from solidly propertied families. However, if you read the proponents of the Constitution—and their opponents as well—you will discover that they abhorred equality and feared democracy. True, they favored popular sovereignty—the political correctness of their age—but they were terrified of demagogues who might seek to take away their property.

The Framers of the Constitution feared state legislatures were insufficiently devoted to the protection of private property. They were concerned that many state legislatures were dominated by demagogues who, bent on redistribution of wealth, had sponsored legislation to create paper money and to release debtors from their obligations, which destroyed property values, hurt commerce, and slowed the infusion of foreign capital.

During the popular uprisings of the 1780's, the courts in several states had shut down, making the enforcement of property rights impossible. The Constitution was designed to solve these problems by granting the federal government control over currency, forbidding state legislatures from interfering with contracts (contract being a means of preserving and transferring property rights), and setting up a Supreme Court that could ensure that property and the rule of law were preserved.

Stephen B. Presser is the legal-affairs editor for Chronicles.

How did the Constitution guarantee property rights? And how was it that those holding federal office were to be shielded from the temptations to which those in state government had succumbed? How could the federal government be staffed with virtuous individuals capable of resisting the lure of lucre and power? One solution was electing George Washington—a veritable platonic form of virtue and honor—president, and then hoping that everything worked itself out under his guidance. To an astonishing extent, that is exactly what happened.

Washington was a brilliant leader. He deferred to Hamilton, who reinforced property rights by funding the national debt at par, creating a national bank to stabilize commerce, and suppressing the Whiskey Rebellion, demonstrating that the federal government would not allow the law to be flouted as it had been in the states before the Constitution.

The more difficult task was to set up a governmental hierarchy that would produce future Washingtons, so that the federal system would survive when the titans of our founding era were gone. As Madison makes clear in the *Federalist*, men are not angels: Powers should be separated so that none might wield too much; and powers should be checked and balanced so that, if one branch of the government fell into evil hands, the others could correct any imbalance. The president could veto congressional legislation, the Congress could impeach and remove executive officials or judges, and judges could determine the constitutionality of acts of Congress and the executive.

Still another check on federal power was the concept of dual sovereignty, or federalism, which produced a government of limited and enumerated powers. The federal government would be able to check some actions of the states, but the states possessed most of the governmental authority, preventing the federal government from degenerating into absolute tyranny. Almost every American high-school student (or at least those

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who attended 30 or more years ago) learned about the separation of powers and checks and balances—although few seem familiar with the idea of dual sovereignty.

Fewer still understand a third set of constitutionally dictated safeguards that have largely been discarded. One of these was implicit: Members of the House of Representatives were to be selected by the exercise of the franchise within the states; in all of the states, this meant those owning sufficient property to qualify as an elector. Generally speaking, voters were freeholders or the sons of freeholders; they had enough of a stake in the community to vote in a manner that safeguarded their property. The Framers knew that propertyless voters might vote to take property away from those who had it; worse still, having nothing to lose, they might sell their votes to designing demagogues who would promise to take someone else's property and redistribute it.

An even more interesting conservative political decision of the Framers was the method of selecting senators and the president. This was to be done indirectly, because the Founders believed that, by having the people select the *electors* rather than the actual candidates, the system would not produce candidates seeking to curry popular favor, but men noted for talent and virtue, capable of being trusted with high public responsibility.

Presumably, those officeholders would not be men bent on redistribution but devoted to the protection of property. Since the president and the Senate bore the delicate task of selecting judges and negotiating treaties, men with the interests of the commonwealth in mind—not men who might curry favor with the rabble—would be preferred for the Senate and presidency. Senators were to be selected by state legislatures (a paradoxical move in light of the distrust of state legislatures that had led to the Constitution itself), and presidents were to be selected by the Electoral College, an assembly of *unpledged* electors picked expressly for that purpose.

Unfortunately, the so-called "Progressive Era" of the early 20th century, and the constitutional amendments it left in its wake, have virtually done away with this scheme. (And what the Progressive Era did not ruin, the Warren and Burger Courts seem to have set out to demolish.) As we have seen most strikingly in the case of the Senate impeachment trial of President Clinton, the passage of the 17th Amendment, which provides for direct election of U.S. senators, has produced a body in which focus groups and polls are far more important than the welfare of the nation. Each took an oath, before they tried the case of President Clinton, to uphold the Constitution—which, as David Schippers's book *SellOut: The Inside Story of President Clinton's Impeachment* makes clear, should have led them to convict the President (or at least hold a trial with live witnesses). Virtually all of the senators ignored their obligation to hold an actual trial, and half of them ignored the evidence of obstruction of justice, tampering with witnesses, and perjury that should have led them to remove President Clinton from office. But the polls told them the American people would not have approved of his removal, and so demagoguery triumphed in the Clinton impeachment battle, as it triumphs too often over the kind of disinterested virtue once thought necessary to protect the republic and its property owners.

Another "Progressive" amendment permitted a federal income tax, which further eroded property rights by, in effect, allowing redistribution. And the rise of political parties and electors pledged to vote for the candidates of those parties turned presidential elections into shallow popularity contests, rather than solemn reflections of the nation's property-protection and leadership needs.

By abandoning our constitutional principles, our country by now should have gone to hell. While I do not go that far, I do recognize that it is only because of divine favor, abundant land and resources (*property*, that is), and unparalleled technical ingenuity (protected by intellectual *property* doctrines) that we have remained prosperous. Surely the old adage that God protects children, fools, and the United States of America still rings true. But should we once again enter an era of economic turmoil, or should political leaders even more committed to redistribution than the Clinton administration ever take office, the precariousness of property rights could become acute.

Let us not forget that Locke's *Second Treatise*—which is echoed in our Declaration of Independence—did not talk about securing inalienable rights to life, liberty, and "the pursuit of happiness" (whatever that means); it spoke of life, liberty, and the protection of property, as did state constitutions at the time of the framing of the U.S. Constitution. Take Pennsylvania's, recognized as the most radical of the new state constitutions. It stated that "all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty, *acquiring, possessing and protecting property*, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety."

Perhaps part of our problem is simply that we are used to big government; it no longer frightens us the way it should. We occasionally remember that a government big enough to give us everything we want is also big enough to take it all way, but most of us are seduced by the possibilities. Too few protested when the Clinton administration, in effect, benefited from a presumption that the federal government can do anything it wants as long as it can concoct some far-fetched argument that a tenuous reading of administrative practice, statute, or a court case permits it. In other words, anything "legal" is presumed to be good, and anytime anybody can argue something is legal, it ought to be justifiable. That is the road to confiscation and redistribution—the road on which we are now travelling.

The Framers understood another dimension of decent lawmaking: There can be no order without law, no law without morality, and no morality without religion. Christian religion, at least, if it cautions against putting your faith in princes and lucre, also understands that property ownership ought to be protected as a means of creating a citizenry that can use its wealth to better the community. Jesus did urge His disciples to abandon worldly goods to preach His word, but the parables seem to suggest that He understood personal wealth could also be harbored and used by its owners to promote the interests of all.

One of the mysteries you encounter reading philosophers like Locke, and documents such as the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776, is that they never seem to explain *why* we should protect property rights. Instead, they defer to an implicit notion that God wills that we have property, just as we are regarded, in Lockean theory, as His property.

The problems we encounter when we seek to protect property do not simply stem from poor education, a wayward federal government, misconceived constitutional amendments, and courts that have forgotten that they are not legislatures. As a dead mackerel rots from the head down, today even the state legislatures and courts have forgotten about the ideals of the late 18th century. Our problems may rest just as much with state and local governments as with the federal. c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Antiquities of the Republic

by Samuel Francis

"The United States shall guarantee to every state in this Union a republican form of government."
—Constitution of the United States, Article IV

States' Rights and the Union: Imperium in Imperio, 1776-1876
by Forrest McDonald
Lawrence: University of Kansas Press; 296 pp., $29.95

◆

Until the triumph of the civil-rights movement at the end of the 1960's, probably the most disruptive and recurrent conflict in American politics came from the struggle between central authority in the federal government and local authority at the level of the states. Since the 1960's, the issue seems almost to have vanished, although states' rights are periodically trotted out by one side or another to score a debating point. While the defense of local community and authority has historically been associated with the political right, last year liberal columnist E.J. Dionne wrote a column challenging the Supreme Court's ruling that made George W. Bush president by arguing that the ruling violated states' rights.

It is not surprising, given the political football that the concept of states' rights has often been in our history, that few historians have seemed to take it very seriously—especially since the civil-rights movement, when its invocation by segregationists supposedly "discredited" the concept. In the 1950's, journalist James J. Kilpatrick published an explicitly segregationist book, *The Sovereign States*, that remains one of the best defenses of states' rights ever published, even though Kilpatrick later repudiated the book and the positions he defended. Forrest McDonald's most recent work of scholarship is largely free of polemic and is certainly not a tract for segregation, although he does recapitulate much of what Kilpatrick wrote in his long-out-of-print book.

Anatol Wolff

McDonald's book is a history of the use of the idea of states' rights and its implications in such doctrines as interposition, nullification, and secession, as well as a compact and highly informative (if sometimes rather dry) history of the United States in terms of states' rights and the legal and political conflicts centered on the concept. Since much of what really shaped our constitutional and political history is now being lost because of ideological teaching and deliberately inculcated falsehoods and illiteracy, what he has to tell us in this book is invaluable. Those who, for either political or scholarly reasons, are seriously interested in the concept of states' rights and the federalism it informed will find McDonald's excellent little book irreplaceable.

McDonald rightly sides with the proponents of the compact theory of the formation of the U.S. Constitution, holding that Lincoln was wrong to claim in his message to Congress of July 4, 1861, that "the Union is older than any of the States, and, in fact, it created them as States." This "'nationalist' interpretation, as it has

Samuel Francis is Chronicles' *Washington editor.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been called, is untenable," McDonald writes, and he treats sympathetically the various conflicts in American history that involved the rights of the states that follow from the compact theory. This position places him—with respect to states' rights, if not to other issues—on the side of the Confederacy as opposed to Lincoln, Calhoun and Hayne as opposed to Webster and Jackson, and Jefferson and Madison as opposed to Hamilton and John Adams. McDonald seems to harbor an intense dislike of Jackson, blaming his crusade against the Bank of the United States for the economic collapse of 1837 and the destruction of the American financial system and finding him responsible as well for the weakness of the presidency during most of the 19th century. Jackson failed to "embody the spirit of the nation" and "brought such disrepute to his office that that vital function of the presidency could scarcely be performed again for the remainder of the century." McDonald allows that Jackson "believed in states' rights," as his Supreme Court appointments show, even though he boldly asserted the "nationalist" theory in his proclamation against nullification in South Carolina, and "his eight years in office saw the triumph of the states' rights doctrine."

But McDonald's account of King Andrew pales beside his portrayal of Father Abraham. His summary of the constitutional depredations of Abraham Lincoln is the most concise and comprehensive I have seen in a mainstream work of scholarship, although McDonald rather incongruously claims that Lincoln "took seriously" his oath of office to uphold the Constitution while writing that, "If it proved necessary, in his judgment, to break a host of minor laws or constitutional provisions and to trample on the rights of loyal citizens in the doing, so be it." By 1862, Lincoln's administration had imprisoned some 14,000 citizens in military prisons under martial law and held them without trial and without habeas corpus, which the President had summarily suspended. (Jefferson Davis, McDonald notes, suspended habeas corpus in the Confederacy; he did so, however, with the consent of the Confederate Congress, while Lincoln acted without congressional approval.) By 1863, Lincoln also controlled most of the governors of the unionist states. "The governors could no longer claim that Lincoln was their creature; now it was Lincoln who had elected the governors. They could offer only token resistance during the remainder of the war." Had it not been for the sheer corruption of the Republican Party under Grant and his cronies and their indifference to radicalism—probably also for the death of Lincoln himself—the Lincoln era would have seen the permanent destruction of republican government in the United States. As it was, although the congressional and executive branches ceased exercising the enhanced powers they had seized during the war, the Supreme Court revived states' rights in the postwar period and enabled constitutional government to survive.

Although McDonald's book is a much needed account of both the theory (political and legal) of states' rights and its history, it has two shortcomings. In the first place, it fails to bring the history up through the 20th century; instead, it stops at 1876, when an increasingly conservative court used states' rights theories to gut Radical Republican legislation enacted during Reconstruction. McDonald does offer a thumbnail sketch of the revival of the Tenth Amendment in recent years, but a closer discussion of who has used states' rights and who has rejected them in the 20th century would have given his book a completion that it seems to lack.

The other shortcoming is McDonald's refusal to examine the larger forces that, at various times in our history, have pushed or resisted states' rights. The most obvious such force, of course, has been the South, but McDonald does show that, in the 1850's, when the federal government was mainly friendly to Southern interests, "the attitudes of many southerners came more nearly to approximate the constitutional views of John Marshall than those of Jefferson and Jackson, even as Yankees were adopting a Jeffersonian and Jacksonian suspicion of the federal government and the Supreme Court." Earlier, of course, New England's dislike of the War of 1812 led to the secessionism of the Hartford Convention. While McDonald does show that different political forces have used states' rights as they proved convenient for their interests and abandoned or muted their use of them as they proved inconvenient, an account of the eventual demise of states' rights as the result of the triumph of a centralizing economy and technology and the demand of those who control them for political uniformity and centralization would have been instructive. Writing that history, of course, would have carried McDonald well beyond 1876 into the Progressive Era and the 20th century.

McDonald ends his book on a cautiously optimistic note, concluding that, "in the 1990's, as in the 1870's, states' rights had found a powerful friend, but, given the five-to-four majority, a fickle one." He is more optimistic than I. It is reasonable to expect from the Supreme Court occasional invocations of defunct constitutional doctrines like states' rights, just as we can occasionally expect similar reflexes from political forces that dislike or see themselves threatened by centralization and national unity. But the brute fact is that the concept of states' rights is as dead as the Old Republic it animated, slain by the conjuncture of the centralizing economic and technological imperatives of the last century and their political expression in the architects of the leviathan state in both political parties. The real origins of the Constitution, the truth of the compact theory, and the nature of "federalism" itself are today merely arcana suitable to antiquarians; they are virtually unknown in law schools and public discussion, and even conservative officeholders in Washington usually harbor only an inchoate idea of them, when they entertain any sympathy at all. Moreover, states' rights and the localism they are supposed to protect cannot thrive in a political order in which the local has become simply an appendage of the central and looks to the central government for the fodder it devours, and when even the champions of the states' rights legacy prove too ignorant to know the difference. Last year, the Southern Party, which advocates the secession of the South from the United States, fielded its first candidate and won its first political victory. The candidate's name was Wayne Willingham, and he was elected mayor of West Point, Alabama, by the whopping margin of one vote. Should the reader conclude the Willingham landslide is evidence of the coming resurrection of states' rights, at least in the South, and the rejection of the federal leviathan that smothers them, he ought to be disabused. As the Florence, Alabama, *Times Daily* reported in September, "Willingham said he campaigned not on Southern nationalism but on getting more state and federal grant money to help West Point . . . "

c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Psst—Can We Talk?"

by Richard D. Lamm

The Race to the Bottom: Why a Worldwide Worker Surplus and Uncontrolled Free Trade Are Sinking American Living Standards
by Alan Tonelson
Boulder, CO: Westview Press; 222 pp., $25.00

◆

There is a story, perhaps apocryphal, about a Chinese scholar who was asked by a student, "What is the long-term impact of the French Revolution?" His answer: "It's too early to tell, it's simply too early to tell."

Those borrowed words would be my response to the question of the impact of the globalization of trade on America and the American worker. It is too early to tell; and the answer is bound to be a mixture of positives and negatives rather than a simple, single answer. I believe we *can* say that economic history has shown that international trade generally has made the world wealthier, but that begs the larger, more complete question. Who benefits from the new global trade order? Who pays? Who sets the rules? What will be the effect of current global trading patterns a decade or two from now? How do we distribute the fruits of global trade in a fair and just manner?

Many experts don't even consider these issues open to debate. Paul Krugman, a usually thoughtful economist and columnist, dismisses critics of global trade as "entirely ignorant men" who are "startlingly crude and ill-informed." Paul Krugman, meet Alan Tonelson, author of *The Race to the Bottom: Why a Worldwide Worker Surplus and Uncontrolled Free Trade Are Sinking American Living Standards.*

In his articulate, passionate, yet thoughtful book, Tonelson argues that globalization has undermined American wages by greatly expanding the pool of workers potentially available to American business. The whole world is now one vast labor market for most industries, which therefore can insist upon low wages and enforce their insistence by moving production abroad. The result is a race to the bottom for wages, but not *only* wages: The same dynamic lowers standards in worker and environmental protection. Wealth-generating entities can shop the world to find people or governments, desperate for economic advancement, who can be exploited—or corrupted.

Tonelson documents in great detail how the indiscriminate and unequal opening of America's markets to world trade has undermined the typical American's earning power and standard of living, despite the fact that the United States has recently experienced the longest economic expansion in the nation's history.

Tonelson considers current trade rules to be a Faustian bargain by which many governments sell their national souls (i.e., compromise just wages, worker safety, and environmental health) to gain some short-term economic benefit. He warns America against confusing temporary success in trade with long-term success and maintains that we are paying a much higher price for global trade than most Americans know—or admit. The "race to the bottom" was inevitable and will continue, with great danger to a majority of Americans.

Tonelson demonstrates how the benefits of global trade flow unequally to those in the upper-income brackets. A few benefit, while the majority of American workers pay the price. He claims that, taking inflation into account, global trade for the last 25 years has helped cause the living standards (as measured by compensation received for every hour of work) of an overwhelming majority of Americans either to stagnate or decline. For the first time in the nation's history, a generation of Americans is, on the whole, doing worse economically that its predecessors, despite many years of solid American economic performance. Not only have low-income workers seen their living standards deteriorate, but, between 1973 and 1998, real hourly wages *fell* for the bottom 60 percent of the entire workforce in the United States. For another 10 percent, real hourly wages rose a miniscule seven cents during this 25-year period, while virtually all of the gain went to those in the top five or ten percent of American households. Hardest hit by this trend are low-income workers, on whom the impact of uneven trade is far greater and whose skill levels make them the most vulnerable. If Tonelson is correct, that means that, for 25 years, seven out of ten American workers failed to keep up, or merely kept even, with living costs, though most of these years saw solid national economic growth. It is almost impossible to find a category of production worker that has stayed significantly ahead of living costs since the early 1970's. Tonelson quotes Lester Thurow of MIT as remarking that not since 1929 have real wages fallen for most American workers at the same time that output per worker was rising. For most of us, regardless of political philosophy, there is something wrong with this picture.

In 1994, every American was essentially competing with 21 people from all over the world (as opposed to fewer than three people in 1989); this number can only expand, and expand dramatically, with the increased globalization of trade. American workers at many levels, either by outsourcing or by the effects of immigration, will find themselves competing with workers throughout the world who are willing to work for far less than American wages. In a world where about two billion people live on less than $700 a year, this cannot be good news to the American wage earner.

Tonelson claims that the impact of the trade deficit is larger than generally estimated by official trade statistics, many multinational companies having established production facilities abroad that used to be located in the United States. As a result, when parts and raw materials are shipped to foreign facilities by parent companies in the United States, they are counted as "exports" under official U.S. trade figures, even though they reenter the country as imports after most of the added high-value work has been done abroad. The process cannot possibly produce the kind of job-creating and wage-boosting effects in the United States that most Americans assume exports have accomplished. Quite the contrary: In many instances, these exports deserve to be equated with displaced American jobs as surely as do imports that compete with American-made goods. This is not "ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

porting" in any traditional sense of the word: Rather, the process is outsourcing, the net effect of which is the loss of American jobs.

I question, though, whether Tonelson adequately deals with two related points. One is the long-term impact of our annual record-breaking trade deficits. Won't another shoe drop as the United States turns from the world's largest creditor nation to the world's largest debtor nation? Won't there be a delayed impact from trade deficits long after the immediate impact is absorbed? There may be both an immediate job loss *and* a delayed loss in the American standard of living. It seems only common sense that, when one generation imports more than it exports and gives dollars to make up the difference, another generation will have to reclaim those dollars by exporting more than it imports (or else turn over American assets to redeem the dollars held abroad). Has America fully calculated the impact of the staggering trade deficits that characterize our recent trade policy?

And what about the related thorny issue of immigration? Most immigrants are poor; their poverty is what brings them to the United States in the first place. This drives down the wages of low-income Americans even more directly than trade policy does. Is there any real difference between exporting a job through trade and importing a worker through immigration? Tonelson touches on the problem but backs away from a full discussion of the impact of massive immigration to this country.

Immigration policy is almost a taboo subject in most quarters. Perhaps that is because, as Edward Abbey once pointed out, conservatives love cheap labor while liberals love cheap causes. Whatever the motivation, we largely ignore the effect immigration (which adds approximately one million mostly poor, unskilled people to the American population every year) has on the American worker and on American society. When you increase the supply of immigrants to the low-skilled workforce, inevitably you depress wages and working conditions. The National Academy of Sciences has found that immigration has a definite negative impact on lower-skilled, less-educated Americans, thus widening the gap between rich and poor in this country. Not only are immigrants poor when they come here, they are more likely than the native population to remain poor. Present-day immigrants have less education, fewer skills, pay less in taxes, and are more likely to avail themselves of welfare and other government services than native households are. These facts, however, are seldom mentioned in public.

America needs and deserves a broader, more thoughtful debate on trade policy and immigration than we have generated to date. Both phenomena have larger costs than we currently are willing to admit. Tonelson's book could help start that debate.

Richard D. Lamm is a former governor of Colorado.

Wolfe in Wolfe's Clothing

by George Garrett

O Lost: A Story of the Buried Life
by Thomas Wolfe
Text established by Arlyn and Matthew J. Bruccoli
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press; 736 pp., $29.95

To Loot My Life Clean: The Thomas Wolfe-Maxwell Perkins Correspondence
Edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli and Park Bucker
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press; 340 pp., $39.95

◆

What we have here are two good books published by the increasingly adventurous University of South Carolina Press in celebration of the centenary of Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938). *O Lost* is the original version of what became *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929), the text being carefully established and edited by Arlyn and Matthew J. Bruccoli from a pencil draft in 17 ledgers, a typescript carbon copy (with a few missing pages), and five clusters of the ribbon copy. The editors tell us that "The setting copy of *Look Homeward, Angel* is unlocated and presumed lost." The job of composing an accurate text—a labor of love by the editors who have foregone any earnings and royalties in favor of the Wolfe estate—was more complicated than it might have been since neither Wolfe nor his famous editor, Maxwell Perkins, nor his typist, Abe Smith, troubled themselves very much with small details. Most of the line editing and proofreading and correction for Scribner's was accomplished by poet-editor John Hall Wheelock. A few months after publication of *Angel*, Wolfe received a letter from Louis N. Feipel, whose hobby was proofreading published books and who sent Wolfe a list of hundreds of errors and inconsistencies. According to the editors, none of these errors and inconsistencies in *Angel* was ever emended. The scholarship is solid, and the strategy of the editors direct. "The rationale for this edition is to establish the text of *O Lost* that should have been published in 1929 by Charles Scribner's Sons after necessary editing, house styling and proofing."

To Loot My Life Clean: The Thomas Wolfe-Maxwell Perkins Correspondence, published simultaneously with *O Lost*, is what it announces itself to be and something more. It offers some 251 letters exchanged between Wolfe and Perkins, John Hall Wheelock, Charles Scribner, III, and others at Scribner's, roughly two thirds of which have never been published. The letters are presented chronologically from the March 1928 "Note For the Publisher's Reader," written before Wolfe first made contact with Perkins, to Perkins' final telegram to Fred Wolfe on the occasion of Tom's death—"Deeply sorry . . . " In addition to useful notes, there are five appendices—"Undatable Letters," "Unmailed Wolfe Letters," "Maxwell Perkins' Biographical Observations on Thomas Wolfe," "Errors and Inconsistencies in the Published Text of *Look Homeward, Angel*," and "Scribner's Alteration Lists for *Of Time and the River*." Taken together, these two books, among other things, definitively dispel the popular myth that, somehow or other, Wolfe was an invention of Maxwell Perkins. As Bruccoli and Bucker put it,

> According to the popular version of this story, Wolfe was an undisciplined writer whose exuberant, overwritten prose could only be published through a collaboration with his editor. Perkins is portrayed as a controlling editor-father to Wolfe, the child-writer, from whom words flowed unhindered and unexamined. . . . The letters published here document Wolfe's artistic and professional problems

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and demonstrate how Perkins, as both editor and friend, aided Wolfe in solving them. They set the record straight.

Perkins, who worked with a variety of well-known writers—Hemingway and Fitzgerald, Caroline Gordon, Nancy Hale, and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings among them—seems to have concerned himself chiefly with questions of structure and point of view. Thus, the fundamental differences between *O Lost* and *Angel* are structural and depend on limiting the point of view, as much as possible, to the consciousness of the protagonist, Eugene Gant. *O Lost* was clearly intended by Wolfe to be a much more inclusive and omniscient narrative. Certainly the book, though composed of much of the same autobiographical materials as *Angel* and *Of Time and the River*, is a different novel and one well worth the expense and effort of resurrection. Whether or not it is, as the editors assert, a "better" novel than *Look Homeward, Angel* is a judgment call: It all depends. What is certain, though, is that, as a first novel by a new and unknown writer, it would not likely have been published by Scribner's (or anyone else) except in some kind of cut and rearranged form. Not that *O Lost* was, by any serious standards, too long or too experimental. Once *Look Homeward, Angel* had been published and had achieved considerable commercial and critical success, length and size were less of a problem, as witness the next novel—*Of Time and the River*.

In combination, *O Lost* and *To Loot My Life Clean* serve to answer some long-standing questions, even as they raise others. After them, Wolfe has to be taken as demonstrably a more assured craftsman, possessed of a larger and more complex vision than he has usually been considered to have had. Perkins was uniformly helpful and sympathetic, especially in the making of *Of Time and the River*, but Wolfe was always his own man. "Real life" was somewhat more complicated, however. Driven by a fierce hunger for fame (something more than "celebrity"), Wolfe was often difficult and disingenuous; often, in Perkins' word, "turbulent." Like Hemingway and Fitzgerald, his presence on the Scribner's back list ultimately earned the publisher a fortune. Wolfe, however, had serious money problems: Scribner's was considerate, but niggardly. With full appreciation of the venture of the University of South Carolina Press, one must wonder if the present-day Scribner's were not the appropriate publisher of these books. We are also left wondering why it took so long for all this to matter—that is, why Wolfe's literary reputation suffered after his untimely death and in spite of his undeniable achievement. The Perkins myth, overturned by these books, is part of it. So is politics. The 1930's version of political correctness was, if anything, even more obnoxiously obstreperous than the current one.

Finally, there is the aesthetic factor. Though Wolfe was much admired by readers and many other writers, he was an original, a romantic, not easily to be understood or honored by modernist and postmodernist critics. Nevertheless, his works have remained in print and his influence on three generations of American writers seems undiminished.

George Garrett is professor emeritus of English at the University of Virginia.

Heart Murmur

by Gail White

"That little murmur wasn't there before,"
the doctor says, folding his stethoscope.
"The valves are stiffening a bit with age.
It's natural." So is the hangman's rope.

I know my joints are losing that young-roe-
upon-the-mountain suppleness I thought
would last forever 20 years ago
(much like the blue Toyota that I bought).

The once-unheard of word cholesterol
is now a lively presence in my blood.
Diets have been advised, and exercise,
and other boring measures meant for good.

But Nature's way is best. I don't expect
to live forever, or to nurture clones,
nor hold my breath waiting to resurrect
my fat-free, sugar-free, all-natural bones.

War and Peace, and Politics

by Thomas Fleming

The Red Horse
by Eugenio Corti
San Francisco: Ignatius Press;
1015 pp., $29.95

◆

Eugenio Corti is one of the greatest Christian writers of the past half-century. Although he is virtually unknown to the anti-Christian literary establishment in Italy, he is revered not only by conservative Italian Catholics but by straight-thinking Protestants in France, Switzerland (Jean-Marc Berthoud), and the United States (Douglas Kelly). His literary output includes a magnificent play (*The Trial and Death of Joseph Stalin*), a memoir of his military service on the Russian front during World War II (published by University of Missouri Press as *Few Returned*), and—among other works of fiction—his magisterial three-volume novel, *Il Cavallo Rosso*—*The Red Horse*.

This translation has been a long time in the making, and its checkered history will someday make an amusing tale. Russell Kirk (inspired by his Italian translator, Mario Marcolla) arranged for an initial version to be done over ten years ago. This version was corrected first by an Italian expert in English literature and subsequently revised by me. The miracle of the story (whose complexity I have only hinted at) comes at the end, when

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the president of Ignatius Press, Father Joseph Fessio, S.J., agreed to publish the entire work in one volume. As someone who has been involved in this project for ten years, I do not make the slightest pretense to impartiality. I have blurbed the book, written a sales letter for it, and would not dream of calling this essay a "review," though Chilton Williamson has given permission to include it in the *Reviews* section.

What have I left to say about a work I have read several times—indeed, learned half of my literary Italian by studying it? Finishing that sentence, I looked up to see on the inner door of my office a vast yellow poster advertising a speech given in the town of Carate Brianza, not far from Dr. Corti's home in Besana: ***Il Cavallo Rosso* di Eugenio Corti negli USA . . . Relatore Thomas J. Fleming**. In that lecture, given in April 1993, I emphasized the agrarian aspects of the novel whose moral center is "Nomana" (= Besana), a small town in the Brianza, which is a hilly district of Lombardia stretching east to west to the south of Como and Lecco. Although the area still has many unspoiled farms, green hilltops, and patches of forest, the Brianza is also home to the small textile manufacturers that have made Lombardy a center of the apparel and fashion industry since the Middle Ages. (In Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*, set in the early 17th century, Renzo, who lives a little south of Lecco, was a weaver.)

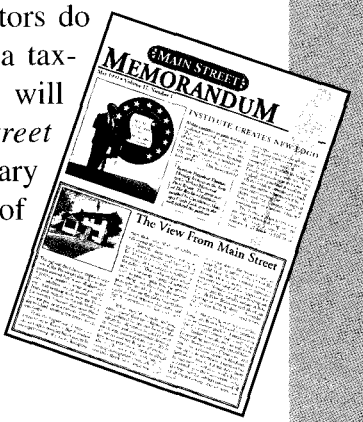
Corti begins his novel by painting a picture of two peasants, father and son, going about their age-old task of plowing their field just outside Nomana. The central cast of characters, however, is more urban: the textile manufacturer who runs his business with solid "Protestant" ethics combined with a medieval loyalty to his people (not really just "employees") and his family and their friends. The novel chronicles the adventures of the manufacturer's son Ambrogio, Ambrogio's schoolfriend Michele Tintori, and Ambrogio's cousin Manno through the history of fascist Italy, the war (which Corti saw from both sides), the bitter civil strife that concluded World War II in Italy, and the slow, inexorable degradation of a great Christian people into the Italy of today.

A good part of the book is devoted to a graphic depiction of the lives of the Italian soldiers whom Mussolini dispatched to the Russian front. A vast number of them died in combat, and of those who were taken prisoners by the Russians, very few returned: Palmiro Togliatti, head of the Italian Communist Party, told Stalin not to send back the Italian POW's because they would spill the beans on the reality of life in the worker's paradise. Predictably, Togliatti is revered in Italy as the patriot who eschewed violence (though he and his party kept contact with the Red Brigades) and brought the communists into the mainstream. Some of the most heartrending episodes in the novel, in fact, take place after the war, when the children of the soldiers take to running with a hip, skirt-chasing priest who preaches the glories of communism. Like so many Cassandras, the veterans watch in horror as their friends and children believe the propaganda and reject the true witnesses to the truth.

But *The Red Horse* is not simply a novel about war and politics. It is a saga of family life, of true love, and of love misplaced. Imagine a work that is more readable than *Gone with the Wind* and at least as serious as *War and Peace*, and you will form some conception of its power. If you are like me, you probably imagine that everything good was written before you were born, but that is despair talking. There are fine novelists writing today in the United States (George Garrett and Cormac McCarthy, to name only two) and in France (Jean Raspail). Lombardia, the region of Italy's greatest novelist, Alessandro Manzoni, has produced another master: Eugenio Corti. If you put

Are You a Member of The Rockford Institute ?

Wouldn't you like to know what *Chronicles* editors do when they're not writing for *Chronicles*? For a tax-deductible membership donation of $25, you will receive the Institute's quarterly publication, *Main Street Memorandum*, your source for all the hard-hitting commentary and Rockford Institute news that can't fit in the pages of *Chronicles*. To join, send a check for $25 to:



TRI Membership
928 North Main Street
Rockford, IL 61103

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

off buying and reading this book for five years, you will have only yourself to blame.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles *and the president of The Rockford Institute.*

Hogan Forever

by J.O. Tate

The Fundamentals of Hogan
by David Leadbetter with Lorne Rubinstein
New York: Doubleday and Sleeping Bear Press; 133 pp., $27.50

◆

On July 25, 1997, Ben Hogan died in Fort Worth at the age of 85; his widow, Valerie, did not long survive him. In the season of 2000, Tiger Woods smashed scoring records in the U.S. Open, the British Open, and the PGA Championship, winning nine tournaments for the year, and setting the golfing world on its ear. So what happened? Book after book on Hogan emerges, as though the man hadn't won his last tournament at Colonial in 1959, and as though he had not since departed the scene in more than one way. The evidence says that Hogan never left us, and that Hogan, not Woods, is the man people think of when they consider that infernal anomaly, the golf swing, and the challenge of golf itself. People still talk about Hogan—they do so even when they talk about Woods. Tiger's nine wins were a lot, but Hogan won 11 in 1948 and 13 in 1946. Tiger Woods won three out of four major championships in 2000, but Hogan won three out of the three he entered in 1953. At the Players Championship in 2000, Hal Sutton explicitly refused to be intimidated by Tiger Woods, and a look in his bag revealed one reason why: a set of irons forged with the name *Ben Hogan*. The man just won't go away.

In recent times, we have seen the release of various videotapes devoted to Hogan, such as Clem Darracott's *In Pursuit of Perfection* (The Bootlegger, 1995), an excellent home movie of Hogan practicing at Augusta in 1967; a digitized version of *Shell's Wonderful World of Golf*, Hogan vs. Snead at the Houston Country Club, as aired February 21, 1965 (also Bootlegger); and the Golf Channel's *Ben Hogan: The Golf Swing*, in which Jim McLean does verbally much of what Leadbetter has done in text. And there have been books. A short list would include Curt Sampson's hostile and unauthorized biography *Hogan* (1996), which is largely devoted to analysis of a remote personality. Mike Towle's *I Remember Ben Hogan* (2000) is a miscellany of reminiscences assembled as though to refute Sampson (Hogan liked children and dogs). John Andrisani's *The Hogan Way* (2000) is a shrewd and useful study of Hogan's theories as opposed to his practice, and that brings us to the present volume, with which it has much in common. David Leadbetter, the number-one golf teacher in the world, has worked with some of the best players, perhaps most notably Nick Faldo and Nick Price. Like Andrisani, Leadbetter has framed his book around Hogan's famous one; like Andrisani's, but more so, it is enriched by a wealth of revealing photographs.

Hogan's second book, *Five Lessons: The Modern Fundamentals of Golf* (1957), has never been out of print and has sold over six million copies. Although it is the most important work ever written on the golf swing, those who have studied it have noticed that it has certain limitations. Hogan's vision of the swing as expressed in that study is both instructive and exemplary, as well as idiosyncratic to the point of eccentricity. Andrisani and Leadbetter have insisted that there is a significant gap between what Hogan said and what he actually did. There is another one between the Hogan vision and the instructional paradigms of contemporary teaching professionals such as McLean, Andrisani, and Leadbetter.

In Leadbetter's case, the result is both instructive and yet amusing, though in a way that begins to sour. Leadbetter's revisions of Hogan become rather predictable. On the hands, for example: Hogan advocated a "weak" grip, but Leadbetter doesn't. Hogan wanted a "short" left thumb, and Leadbetter wants a long one. Hogan wanted the club in the palm of the left hand, but Leadbetter doesn't. Hogan cupped his left wrist at the top of his backswing, but Leadbetter doesn't recommend it, even though Hogan once declared that this position was his "Secret." Instead, Leadbetter mentions cupping the *other* wrist. Hogan supinated the left wrist at impact, and Leadbetter likes that, as well he should. What is the alternative? On the address position: Hogan wanted the right foot square, whereas Leadbetter wants a freer approach, with the foot tipped out—a concession to humanity, like many of his revisions. Hogan advocated a wide stance, Leadbetter a narrower one—and for good reason, though Andrisani goes the other way on this point, as does McLean. Leadbetter equivocates on whether Hogan had a reverse pivot, and advocates loading the right side in contradistinction.

On the downswing: Leadbetter insists that Hogan did not do what his book says he did: begin the weight-shift by turning the hips. There was a hip-slide first, as we can see in photographs and film and videotape, and McLean and Andrisani have confirmed this point. Leadbetter goes so far as to recommend "exactly what Hogan advised against"—a pronated left wrist at impact for certain "closed-to-open" players. But even before this, the reader must have already sensed a quality of absurdity—the paradigmatic swing, constantly mentioned and analyzed and illustrated, is repeatedly qualified and even reversed, as Leadbetter works his image of the swing further and further from the Hogan model. And human physiognomy and variety being what it is, Leadbetter has his reasons, as usual.

We are left with an excellent book of instruction, sumptuously illustrated with images any Hoganite must have. But we are also left with a text that Sigmund Freud and, even more, Harold Bloom, would find revealing. Leadbetter had a commercial motive for framing his arguments around Hogan, no doubt. But as an anxious revisionist, he is in the position of a Romantic English poet trying to work around Milton. The belated visionary squirms as he tries to escape from the anxiety of influence and the primal example. Finally, to swing like Hogan, you have to *be* Hogan, and not even Faldo or Price or Woods can do that. To instruct like Hogan, Leadbetter has deconstructed the towering example, with ambiguous results. At the end, golf is still a mystery, exegesis is contingent, and all the hackers mumble "Hogan" as they swing away, more with hope in things unseen than any faith in repeating variable results.

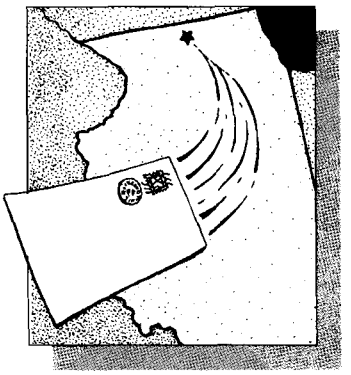
J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter From Rockford

by Scott P. Richert

A Month in the Life of the Industrial Midwest



News Item: "Motorola Inc. will close its only U.S. cellular-phone manufacturing operation, putting 2,500 of 5,000 people out of work to ease sagging profits amid increased global competition. Employees who will remain at the 1.3 million-square-foot plant that opened in 1996 will focus on research, marketing and other activities for the cellular market . . ." ("Motorola cuts 2,500 in Harvard," *Rockford Register Star*, January 21, 2001).

* * *

The first announcement came like a thief in the night. Only four years ago, Motorola's Harvard plant had opened to great fanfare: Politicians and business leaders viewed Motorola's investment in Northern Illinois as a sign that the greater Rockford area was poised to ride the crest of the high-technology wave. Perhaps it would have, if that wave hadn't come crashing to shore. The Galvin family, who founded Motorola in 1928 and run it to this day, seem to be Midwestern patriots who would rather keep the bulk of their operations in the United States. But the dirty little secret of NAFTA and the WTO was not the immediate job losses—which were covered up by both the Clinton administration and its "conservative" critics—but that the rules of the current "free trade" regime are structured in such a way that a company like Motorola may not be able to survive an economic recession *without* transferring jobs overseas. To keep its cell phones, modems, and semiconductors cutting-edge and competitive, a high-tech company must spend vast sums on research and development. It would be economic suicide for Motorola to cut R&D in order to continue employing Americans when it can legally tap a vast pool of lower-wage workers south of the border and overseas.

* * *

News Item: "PrimeCast Inc., a foundry once owned by Beloit Corp., will shut down in March because it couldn't replace the work lost when Beloit Corp. closed. Atchison Casting Corp. . . . made the announcement to PrimeCast's 160 workers Tuesday. . . . PrimeCast opened in 1958 and, at one time, was South Beloit's second-largest employer with more than 300 workers" ("PrimeCast foundry to shut down in March," *Rockford Register Star*, January 25, 2001).

* * *

"The business of America is business," Calvin Coolidge said in 1925, but Silent Cal couldn't have foreseen the day when some "American" businesses would employ predominantly foreign workers. What are the long-term prospects of an industrial city like Rockford when national economic growth depends not so much on the sale of American-made products overseas, but the reduction of wage costs for U.S.-based multinationals? What does it mean for the economic health of families in Northern Illinois when the necessities of life—food, clothing, even medicine—may bear an American brand name, but are produced overseas? Since 1973, both trade restrictions and average household income—measured in real dollars—have declined, while the average number of hours worked per household has risen. In other words, fathers and mothers are spending less time with their children simply to maintain a constant income. At best, that means young children spend more time in daycare. Here in Rockford, it usually means more government-school indoctrination: Almost all local public schools have full-day kindergarten, and over half of all preschoolers in Rockford participate in early childhood education. As higher-paying jobs leave our community and fathers and mothers compensate by taking two or more lower-paying jobs, we move ever closer to Hillary Clinton's "village."

* * *

News Item: "DaimlerChrysler said Monday it will cut 26,000 jobs—including nearly 1,000 in Belvidere—and shutter six plants outside the United States in an effort to stem losses at its financially struggling Chrysler division. By July, the second shift will be eliminated at the Belvidere plant, where 3,300 workers assemble the Neon. Sales of the small car dropped 11 percent last year, and local autoworkers have been idled since Jan. 22 in an effort to reduce inventories. . . . Chrysler is the largest manufacturing employer in the Rock River Valley but will lose that ranking to Hamilton Sundstrand, an aerospace and industrial parts maker that employs 2,900 in Rockford" ("Chrysler to slash 26,000 jobs," *Rockford Register Star*, January 30, 2001).

* * *

The shipping of jobs overseas is simply the latest step in a process of consolidation that has been weakening the industrial base of the Midwest for decades. With its acquisition by Daimler, Chrysler obviously ceased to be an American company, despite the attempt to paint the merger as an "equal partnership." But the acquisition of smaller American companies by larger ones has been just as damaging. When United Technologies Corporation of Connecticut bought out Rockford's Sundstrand Corporation in June 1999 and merged it with their Hamilton Standard division, they cut 500 local jobs within three months. The official history of Hamilton Sundstrand (found on the company's website at *www.hamiltonsundstrandcorp.com/About/history.htm*) is littered with dozens of mergers and acquisitions. Like Chrysler, United Technologies may find that an economic slowdown could make it vulnerable to foreign acquisition; to prevent becoming the object of a merger, it may end up moving even more of Sundstrand's operations out of Rockford.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

* * *

News Item: "The domino effect of manufacturing cutbacks at DaimlerChrysler and Motorola has reached another employer in the Rock River Valley—Textron, which is laying off 75 people from its fastener operations. . . . Textron has had its own problems of late, having registered a loss of $218 million in the fourth quarter of 2000. Last fall, the company said it would close up to 20 plants in a major corporate restructuring. Just last week, Textron cut 3,600 jobs and announced the closing of five plants. . . . Textron still has more than 3,000 workers in the Rockford area and remains the fourth-largest employer in Winnebago County" ("Chrysler, Motorola cuts force layoffs at Textron," *Rockford Register Star*, January 31, 2001).

News Item: "If the production line remains permanently idled, . . . 25 percent of the displaced Chrysler workers will never re-enter the area job market. . . . 'For every assembly job at Chrysler, there may be six to seven jobs affected in the regional economy,' said Mike Flynn, director for the office of automotive transportation at the University of Michigan" ("Chrysler layoffs cause ripples," *Rockford Register Star*, January 31, 2001).

* * *

Rockford's congressman, Don Manzullo, used to trumpet his support for free trade on his congressional website. After the recent job losses in his district, however, the website now notes that he "has been a leader in promoting and encouraging exporting opportunities for small businesses." Perhaps the rhetorical shift is just savvy public relations, but it's also possible that Congressman Manzullo has come to realize that "free trade" today does not imply David Ricardo's "comparative advantage." While Ricardo never states it explicitly, his understanding of the benefits of specialization and trade assumes that the profits of production remain at home. In his famous example of comparative advantage—England specializes in producing cloth while Portugal turns to wine-making—Ricardo never considers the possibility that the Portuguese might try to buy up the English textile mills so that they can keep all of the profits for themselves. Today, however, Rockford and other cities throughout the industrial Midwest are beginning to resemble colonies of East Coast, West Coast, and foreign corporations. The only profits that remain in our community are those that are spent on wages.

* * *

News Item: "ShopKo Stores Inc. . . . will close 23 discount department stores, including one in Rockford that opened 20 months ago on East State Street. The ShopKo closings are the result of a restructuring plan that will cut 2,500 jobs, including 114 in Rockford, most of which are part-time positions" ("ShopKo to close Rockford Store," *Rockford Register Star*, February 1, 2001).

News Item: "Home sales in Winnebago, Boone and Ogle counties declined in January by 13 percent from the same month last year. . . . Brooks Precision, a metal grinding shop . . . , announced that it is closing. The move throws 38 people out of work. And Foresight Financial Group, which operates four area banks at eight locations, reported a 29 percent drop in net earnings" ("Local home sales down; new layoffs," *Rockford Register Star*, February 2, 2001).

* * *

As corporations have cut manufacturing jobs in Rockford, the rest of the local economy has suffered as well. Over the last 20 years, locally owned businesses in Rockford's downtown have fallen victim to chain stores and restaurants on East State Street. Now, as larger chains enter the Rockford market and compete successfully for declining income, many of the smaller and older chains are shutting their doors. And with each round of consolidation and closings, more personal income leaves the area. Even though Rockford is the "most affordable housing market" in the country (thanks largely to our decade-long school-desegregation suit, which has made Rockford's property-tax rate one of the highest in the nation), home sales continue to decline. Tasting the blood in the water, Chicago developers are planning to build low-income apartments and townhouses on the edge of our town—to siphon off more local money.

* * *

News Item: "Textron Inc. . . . said it will lay off another 500 workers. It wasn't immediately clear . . . how many of these job cuts will be made in the Rockford area. Estwing Manufacturing also has laid off 25 of the more than 400 workers at its Rockford plant" ("National unemployment rate grows as more local jobs cut," *Rockford Register Star*, February 3, 2001).

News Item: "Textron . . . laid off 40 production and salaried workers Friday at local operations formerly known as Elco" ("58 local jobs lost at two fastener plants," *Rockford Register Star*, February 8, 2001).

News Item: "Another wave of layoffs is hitting Ingersoll Milling Machine Co. employees, with 50 to 70 workers losing their jobs this week and next. . . . Less than two months ago, Milling Machine laid off an undisclosed number of workers. Earlier in the year, the company eliminated more than 70 jobs" ("Ingersoll adds to its layoffs," *Rockford Register Star*, February 10, 2001).

News Item: "Eighty-five workers lost their jobs this week at Textron's fastening system operations in Rockford and Belvidere." ("Textron cuts 85 more at 2 local plants," *Rockford Register Star*, February 10, 2001).

* * *

In 30 short days, the Rockford area lost two businesses, well over 4,000 manufacturing jobs, and over 100 retail sales positions. And that's just the tip of the iceberg: The *Rockford Register Star* reports that, in the preceding 18 months, nearly 20 area companies "downsized."

As any high-school physics student knows, there are two ways to inflate a balloon: Blow air into it, or tie it off and place it in a vacuum. From our vantage point here in Rockford, it's beginning to appear that the "longest period of economic expansion in American history" was the result of that "great sucking sound" Ross Perot warned us about.

* * *

News Item: "Kelly-Springfield Tire Co. will lay off 100 workers for two months because of slowed sales of light trucks. Two years ago, the company trimmed 850 jobs—half the work force—at the Freeport plant. Its parent, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. . . . , sought to reduce costs by moving operations outside the country. More permanent cuts could be coming to the Freeport site: Goodyear said Wednesday that it will slash 7,200 jobs worldwide to stem financial losses" ("Tire maker lays off 100 for 60 days," *Rockford Register Star*, February 16, 2001). c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter From Rome

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Rome as We Found It

◆

In horse-and-carriage days, foreign visitors to Rome, after an arduous Alpine crossing, commonly entered the city from the north, by the Milvian Bridge which has existed since the second century B.C. Here, on October 28, 312, Constantine had a vision of Christ on the eve of his victory over his rival, Maxentius. Since that time, travelers have complained of this dusty and uninspiring approach to the Eternal City: In 1764, Edward Gibbon noted that "The approach to Rome is not pleasing."

Air travel may have its virtues after all. My first sight of the Mediterranean was through a January haze beneath which stony brown islands punched ragged holes in a satin sea; for me, Gibbon's "*abord du Rome*" was the parallel lines of creamy waves breaking softly on the beach off the right wing of the plane as it coasted down its computerized slope of air toward the green fields, terra-cotta walls, and tiled roofs of Fiumicino and Leonardo da Vinci Airport, adjacent to the village. I had my passport stamped by an impassive Italian immigration agent and went on to baggage claim, where the first Romans I met were a pair of Mormon missionaries from Ogden, Utah.

Within the hour, my colleagues Chris Check and Aaron Wolf of The Rockford Institute and our guests, Ruth Besemer of Boulder, Colorado, and Rick and Linda Zanocco of Rockford, arrived on an American Airlines flight from Chicago. At 8:30 in the morning, after more than eight hours in flight from Detroit and countless bottles of free French wine, I was especially happy to see Chris, who had arranged for a van to take us from the airport to the hotel. Everyone had the vague out-of-body expression of people coming off a transatlantic flight, but nevertheless felt an almost supernatural enthusiasm to get on to Rome.

Intermittent showers fell from a sky like a Renaissance painting, egg-shell blue with smears of pink and yellow cloud above rounded green hills crowned by groves of the spreading, flat-crowned Roman pines, with here and there a palm tree or two. The driver took the *superstrada* into the city, following the Tiber River northeastward in the direction of built-upon hills and a succession of looming church domes, each one of which resembled—but was not—the vaster dome of St. Peter still many miles away. We passed the Basilica of St. Paul Without the Walls, where the Apostle is buried only a few kilometers from the site of his martyrdom, and shortly afterward crossed from the west to the east bank of the river. The van skirted the Circus Maximus, past the Campidoglio on the Capitoline Hill, and rounded the monument to Victor Emmanuel II. The outer shell of the age-darkened Colosseum, a dim and broken hulk, loomed briefly through the rain and Trajan's Column flashed before my eyes before the van darted into a maze of cobbled narrow streets, descended a hill above the Forum of Augustus, and pulled up before the Hotel Forum on the Via Madonna del Monti. Tom Fleming, having arrived with Gail two days before New Year's, stood in the lobby with an expression suspiciously like that of a man waiting for the bar to open. By 11:00 in the morning, Roman time, the French wine had worn off, but Fausto the barman didn't come on duty for another hour yet.

"I'm going upstairs for a lie-down," I told Tom.

He gave me a look of the kind we Westerners reserve for greenhorns who attempt to mount their horse from the wrong side.

"That's not something I would advise you to do. Did you take your melatonin before getting on the plane?"

I muttered something about the pagan environmentalists in Laramie having cornered the melatonin market for their winter-solstice rites and escaped to my room while Tom was greeting Ray Olson from Chicago. The room had a tiled floor, a good-sized bath, and windows opening onto a balcony from which I had a view of tiled rooftops supporting what by February or March would be an irregular but nevertheless impressive hay crop. Without stopping to unpack, I turned down the counterpane and fell asleep across the wide and comfortable bed. When I awoke, the light beyond the window was fading, and I had missed Tom's walking tour to somewhere. (Every Thos. Fleming production abroad demands from its participants the strenuous—one might say merciless—exercise of the calf and thigh muscles, as well as the little gray cells. This trip was to prove no exception to the rule.)

We went for supper—Tom and Gail Fleming, Srdja Trifkovic, Clyde Wilson and his daughter Ann, and I—on the other side of the Colosseum at Pasqualino on Via de Quattro Santi Coronati, where the pasta was homemade and the food superb, though the conversation (the company seemed agreed on the probability of George W. Bush being the last "conservative" president) was somewhat depressing. Suspicious stares from a gentleman at a table across the room confirmed that the restaurant, to which Chris Kopff had introduced Tom a couple of years before, was a neighborhood hangout of the first caliber; in fact my *orate*, a Mediterranean fish finely grilled, and pasta with lentils (something, it occurred to me, even *I* could attempt at home) did not disappoint. From Pasqualino, we wandered in the dark along the Via dei Fori Imperiali, between the floodlit bulk of the Colosseum and the site where Nero's Golden Palace once stood, in the direction of the hotel, where the party turned in. All of it, that is, but Srdja, Thomas, and myself. "Gentlemen," Srdja proposed, "shall we take a walk?"

Turning our backs on the Arch of Constantine, electrically illuminated under a waxing moon, we set out on a midnight walk in the opposite direction across the darkened city: past Trajan's Column and the Palazzo Venezia with its solitary balcony made famous by Benito Mussolini; the Trevi Fountain (also floodlit and surrounded by lovers, photographers, and people tossing coins into the water); the Pantheon (looming suddenly out of the night around a corner); thence to the Via del Corso, from where the sight of the distant Vittorio Emmanuele (nicknamed locally the "Wedding Cake" or, even more appropriately, the "Typewriter") gave us our bearings

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

back to the hotel. The Romans stay out late at night, sauntering past the open shops, the restaurants, the hostarias, birrerias, and trattorias, all of them filled with eminently purchasable, edible, or potable things. ("So much to eat, so little time to do it in," as Clyde Wilson later remarked.) From being raised in Manhattan, I've acquired the survival instincts of an Apache warrior, yet at no time in our nocturnal perambulation did I sense the familiar prick of danger lurking near. Only the pigeons, wheeling in flocks above the floodlit buildings, seemed agitated. Back at the hotel, we sat up drinking pear brandy ("Vilsamovka") from Serbia in Srdja's room for half an hour before I called my first night in Rome a day, and turning in.

At seven the next morning, I sat eating white-bread rolls and fruit and drinking black coffee in the roof restaurant above the hotel while shadows drained from the Roman Forum and the rising sun illuminated the massy green foliage surmounting the Palatine, Capitoline, and Aventine Hills, pinked the brick towers, and fired the marble façades on the Janiculum across the Tiber. After breakfast I took a taxi, together with Mrs. Besemer and the Zanoccos, across town to Vatican City, where I had my first look at St. Peter (from the Piazza) and we walked through the Vatican Museum, rather fussy and academic except for the wonderful tapestries depicting most realistically the Slaughter of the Innocents and seeming to pull you inside the picture (somewhere you felt you really would prefer not to go). The tour ends in the Sistine Chapel, filled, only a few days past New Year's, with Jubilee pilgrims and where the authorities request you (rather unrealistically) not to talk. When, on the way back across the Tiber, I recognized Padre Pio's face stuck on the windshield, the driver gave me a sticker like it to affix to my own vehicle. *"Molto importante, Padre Pio,"* he assured me, taking my hand as I left the cab. For lunch, I went round with the Flemings, Terry and Mary Kohler, and Ray Olson to the Taverna Romana a block from the hotel, where the pasta was again homemade and they gave you jerkied pork, together with sheep cheese and salami, for an antipasto; our relatively simple lunch turned out to be one of the best meals I was to enjoy in Rome. The luncheon conversation, as usual, covered many topics, among which I especially recall Tom quoting the Holy Father whom history reports as saying, "Since God has given us the papacy, we propose to enjoy it."

All play and no work flunks Jack out of the Academia Fleming, so at 1:30 sharp that afternoon we got down to business in the conference room of the Hotel Forum with a talk by Dr. Fleming on the legends of early Rome, followed by Gail Fleming speaking on Roman myth and ritual. (She reminded us that Roman success was produced by the Roman character, which itself was formed by the Roman religion.) The audience's reward for its hard intellectual concentration was a slog through the rain while I caught up further on my sleep, awaking in late afternoon to the sound of water pouring from the surrounding roofs. The walking party, returning soaking wet below the knees, went upstairs to change while I patiently awaited them in the hotel bar over a Prosecco or two. Around suppertime, Srdja Trifkovic showed up, thus resolving the mystery of his absence all day from the proceedings, which Tom had uncharitably attributed to the pear brandy. Not *katzenjammer* but the erasure of his talk from his laptop computer had kept him from us, as he labored for hours in solitary confinement to recreate the text of the original speech.

We got to hear the reconstruction next morning: In "From Republic to Empire," Srdja characterized empire as the product of what he called "the neurotic desire to control all reality." The idea of a Christian empire he dismissed as oxymoronic, empires being unitarian in nature, nations trinitarian. The imperial loathing for organic communities is the spirit of Antichrist, bent on making all people and societies subject to the same plan. Rome's hubristic program, Srdja asserted, though finally a failure, has haunted Europeans ever since. The morning's other talk, "Cicero, Cato, Clodius, and Caesar," was delivered by Tom Fleming. He ended it with a rousing passage from Addison's *Cato*—something about an hour of virtuous liberty being worth more than an eternity of tyranny—before school let out and we all went off to eat . . . again.

In the afternoon, I experienced my first real disruption and breakdown of the ongoing, uncertain tango between the English and the Italian languages I'd been observing since my arrival in Rome. Aaron and I had engaged a Pronto taxi to ride over with Ruth Besemer to the Capitoline Museums, which Tom had described as being a two-minute ride from the Hotel Forum. Confident after several months' study of the *Berlitz Italian Self-Teacher*, I launched into what ought to have been fluent and precise directions, delivered in the local dialect. But the driver didn't know where the Musei Capitolini were. Nor did he know a word of English. Instead, he took both hands off the wheel of the cab as it guided itself at high speed around the Piazza Venezia to make a scribbling motion, as on a pad of paper. "Addresse?" he suggested, scowling. So he did know *one* word—sort of. Only we didn't have anything that corresponded with it to give him. The taxi was in the Via del Plebiscito now, headed into the Corso; already four minutes from the hotel and out of

Aaron D. Wolf

James Schreiber (1-center), Thomas Fleming (center), Mary and Terry Kohler, and Ray Olson (r) admire the Dying Gaul at the Capitoline Museum.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sight of the Capitoline Hill. I looked at Aaron; Aaron looked at me. It's amazing how in a crisis of this sort your brain either shuts down or defaults to foreign languages previously studied, in my case French and Spanish, in that order. "How do we tell him to stop?" Aaron asked, but I couldn't tell him. Either I ranked well toward the bottom of Signor Berlitz's class, or I deserved my money back. In the end, whether deliberately or not, the driver did the smart thing, delivering us to the Piazza S. Pietro, which typically has enough taxis waiting to convey the entire Italian Army to the Austrian front. Here, we swapped horses and rode back to the Capitoline Museums, overlooking the hotel across the Roman Forum. The museum had some fine frescoes depicting scenes from Roman history, but for me the high point of the visit was Chris Check's near-arrest by a mettlesome guard when he took a flash photograph of Aaron and me before an imposing hermaphroditic statue.

From the Capitoline, we descended to the Roman Forum below. "I trod," Gibbon had written, "with lofty step, the ruins of the forum; each memorable stop where Romulus *stood*, or Tully spoke, or Caesar fell, was at once present to my eye; and several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation." And to his father: "Whatever ideas books may have given us of the greatness of that people, their accounts of the most flourishing state of Rome fall infinitely short of the picture of its ruins. I am convinced there never never existed such a nation and I hope for the happiness of mankind that there never will again." As for our party, we inspected the Arch of Septimius Severus (the marble relief all but obliterated by weather on its southern exposure), the Rostra (where Cicero's head, hands, and tongue were displayed), the remains of the Vestal Virgins' temple and altar, the Curia (Caesar would have been stabbed here had the building not been under reconstruction in 44 B.C.) . . . What is there to add to Gibbon's reaction? In a wide puddle below the steps of the Curia, a gaggle of young girls dressed in parochial-school uniforms waded, giggling as they wetted their sky-blue shoes in the muddied water.

Christopher J. Check

Chilton Williamson, Jr., and Aaron D. Wolf (r) pose in front of a hermaphrodite, as Christopher Check (behind the camera) prepares to run.

During the following days, we continued to hear talks ("Images of the Apocalypse" by James Patrick, "Roman Spies and Spies in Rome" by Srdja Trifkovic, "The Age of the Martyrs" by Aaron Wolf, "The Making of Papal Rome" by Marco Respinti, "Good Popes/Bad Popes" by Chris Check, "Pio Nono and His Enemies" by Alberto Carosa, "The Papacy" by Roberto de Mattei, "Why I *Don't* Live in Rome" by Andrei Navrozov, "Italian Lessons From E.M. Forster" by Tom Fleming) early in the morning and late in the afternoon, in between times visiting three of the four major Roman basilicas (S. Maria Maggiore, S. John Giovanni in Laterno, and, of course, S. Pietro in Vatican City), the Pantheon and the Piazza Navona, S. Clemente, a number of churches in Trastevere, the Piazza Bocca della Verità, and the Villa Borghese, among other places. We continued to eat superbly, enjoying a three-hour lunch at Goffredo on the Via Panispenra after hearing Mass celebrated by *three* bishops at S. Maria Maggiore and a fine fish dinner at le Tavernelle (the Mediterranean boasts several delicious species unknown to North American waters). One evening, as a guest of the Kohlers together with the Flemings and Gary Hofmeister and Jo Anne Carmony of Indianapolis, I enjoyed a splendid supper at La Cisterna in Trastevere. (Afterward, we were given a tour of the cistern below the restaurant and treated to an entirely redundant glass of Prosecco.)

On Sunday, with the Flemings, Terry and Mary Kohler, Paul Oberbeck and Kathy Pfeiffer, and the Zanoccos, I heard Mass at SS. Cosmas and Damian overlooking the Roman Forum; after the usual elaborate *pranzo* and another talk, we went walking downtown to see how Romans spend Sunday afternoon. Rome, I discovered, enjoys her Sundays and knows how to make the most of them—outside of church, that is. Major arteries are closed to traffic, the streets flock with pedestrians strolling, eating, and dropping into the innumerable shops that remain open, the Pantheon, and other landmarks not closed for the Sabbath. Somber colors (blues, browns, and black) are currently in vogue among Roman women, who seem divided into two types: the stone knockouts, plainly of the *haute bourgeoisie* and the aristocracy, and the furtively cute and homely, who are just as obviously not. Under one of those wonderfully mixed Roman skies, I took a walk on the Quirinal Hill, past the Pope's summer palace where a uniformed military band played to a large and enthusiastic crowd, then descended by narrow, curving, cobbled streets to the Trevi Fountain, in the vicinity of which I dropped into an hostaria for a glass of wine and a pastry. Lovely Italy, wonderful Rome, where you can walk all day for days without having your aesthetic eye offended, not even once. To paraphrase Nathaniel Hawthorne, in Italy every object is either a work of art, or the raw material for one.

Rome receives twice as much rain annually as does London, the difference being that the Eternal City measures its precipitation over a period of days rather than months. It was on one of these days, strongly recalling the Flood, that we visited St. Peter's and the Necropolis beneath

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gary A. Hofmeister

Dinner at the Hotel Forum with (clockwise from left) Sharif Said, Bob Weir, Chris Check, Mary Kohler, Chilton Williamson, Jr., Ruth Besemer, Clyde Wilson, and Anne Wilson.

it. The great cathedral was—for me, at least—a disappointment. The visual magnitude of its proportions having been deliberately reduced by architectural tricks, the edifice simply does not appear as gigantic as it certainly is (size being the only thing that impressed Mark Twain about the place), while the interior, except for Bernini's splendid baldachin above the high altar, is strangely cold, almost to the point of grimness. And the four statues in the Piers of the Crossing—SS. Longinus, Veronica, Helena, and Andrew—also by Bernini looked to me as if they had been carved from soap. On the other hand, the Crucifix Chapel (Bernini again) with its golden window is living baroque, Michelangelo's Pietà in the Pietà Chapel is more alive than life even though one of its two figures is dead, and I experienced an incommunicable thrill, entirely unexpected, at standing upon the circular stone medallion, of an almost imperial purple and only slightly cracked, where Charlemagne stood to receive from the Pope the crown of Holy Roman Emperor. (The event took place in the Basilica of Constantine on whose site St. Peter's stands, the stone itself having been removed to the new building.) Still, most moving for me finally was the great number of confessionals—carved from mahogany or another dark wood and scattered about the marble flooring like bathing machines on a beach, each with its sign designating one of a Babel of languages—where people from all around the world kneel to confess their sins, each in his own sinful tongue. This was the spectacle which caused the Puritan Hawthorne, who found St. Peter "terribly" disappointing for "its want of effect," to note afterward in his journal his opinion that "a great deal of devout and reverential feeling is kept alive in people's hearts by the Catholic mode of worship."

We were given a tour of the Scavi or Necropolis—my party by a fresh-faced young seminarian from Omaha—over which Constantine's basilica was built and viewed, through a subterranean window, the Confessio beneath the high altar where the bones of St. Peter rest. It was a solemn moment in a solemn, indeed a hallowed, place—but again, not so poignant to my mind as the obelisk in the Piazza S. Pietro, brought to Rome in A.D. 37 by Caligula, who set it up in his circus. It is said to be the last thing Peter, hanging upside down on a cross, saw before his martyrdom.

Then it was mealtime again, as it always seems to be in Italy, and my cosuffering spiritual nature was suppressed once more by temptation in the form of a sumptuous *pranzo,* I no longer remember what or where.

Like time put on fast-forward by increasing age, the tempo of our visit appeared to accelerate with the passing of the days, until the week collapsed into a blur of successive sensations and impressions from which I can recall Marco Respinti arguing that the unification of Italy in reality was the most divisive event in its history, making it necessary for Italians to rediscover and revive their own culture and tradition; and Tom Fleming concluding, in his brilliant appreciation of E.M. Forster and Forster's Italian novels (*A Room With a View* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*), that

> The communists and expatriates are wrong: Loving Italy is not incompatible with loving your own country, your own hometown. This was something the ancients understood . . . They could, like Diocletian, govern the known world and never give up their longing for their native province . . . I hope that you have learned some of these lessons from this week—all too brief that it has been—in the greatest city the world has ever known.

Gary A. Hofmeister

Dinner at the Ristorante Vecchia Roma with (clockwise from left) Alberto Carosa, Judith Bereczky, Rick and Linda Zanocco, Kathleen Pfeiffer, and Paul Oberbeck.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Aaron D. Wolf

Andrei Navrozov points out the bewildering aftereffects of the Tower of Babel.

I recall, too, visiting S. Cecilia in Trastevere (the little habited nun so disappointed when we gave her *only* the sum she requested for the tour), walking with the Flemings beneath the plane trees on and in the neighborhood of the Viale Trastevere, Gail and I enviously eyeing the penthouse gardens overhead, and *pranzo* at *La Ceccha*, where Andrei Navrozov led us (an old Mafia favorite, he explained, hung with more garlic than you could grow on ten hectares and, in the nature of things, somewhat pricey). I recall strolling on the east bank of the swift-flowing tawny Tiber, past the Isola Tiberina as far as the Piazza della Bocca della Verità and S. Maria in Cosmedin, where the Bocca itself resides. The Bocca della Verità, or Mouth of Truth, is a large stone medallion (originally a drain cover) with the likeness of a man's face, open-mouthed: Legend has it that the liar who thrusts his hand into the mouth will have it bitten off. (Thinking that every writer ought to have one, I bought a small plaster replica of the Bocca to carry home with me.) Finally, I recall the last day in Rome, a day to myself, in which to look around on my own—and shop, like any good American. A man can't visit Rome without bringing back something pretty for the ladies.

The weather having turned cool under a gray sky, I wore a topcoat and hat for my walk along the Corso. (Unlike in Milan last spring, the modified Stetson with the pewter elk-head hat pin I wear on trips to the East Coast and abroad seemed an object less of hostility than of curiosity in Rome.) Buying presents for women is something I enjoy, and am practiced at. In a boutique I had previously noticed near the Piazza del Gesù, I found a lovely wool scarf for Jennifer Lucas (its shade of blue just matching her blue eyes) in Michigan, and only a few doors away a woolen *pancha*, a kind of long *serape* bordered by tassels, for Rhonda Stevenson in California, the burgundy dye a perfect offset for her brown ones.

What a woman would have needed an entire afternoon and the following morning to accomplish, I had taken care of in a quarter of an hour. With my packages under my arm and a few hours' free time left, I looked in at the church of S. Andrea della Valle, begun in 1591 and completed by Carlo Maderno, a side chapel of which is the setting for the first act of *Tosca*. (A production by the Metropolitan Opera in the 1970's had a black iron gate with gilded points between the chapel and the nave; one exactly like it closes off the first chapel to your left as you enter the church.) From S. Andrea, I proceeded along the Corso as far as the Ponte Vittorio Emmanuele II, where—within sight of the Castel S. Angelo (from whose parapet Tosca throws herself into the Tiber)—I turned left along the river bank in search of the Cenci Palace. The Cenci—a noble family which became extinct in 1599 when Pope Clement VIII himself ordered its surviving members executed for the murder of the patriarch, Count Cenci—was still a source of fascination for Romans when Shelley visited the city around 1820 and as late as the 1850's when Hawthorne spent a winter there. Intrigued himself by this historical tragedy, from which he wrung strongly antipapal conclusions, Shelley wrote a play about the beautiful Beatrice who, after being ravished by her father, conspired with her mother and brother to murder the depraved count. From the Lungotevere d. Vallati, I turned into the Via Arenula and from there into a warren of narrow crooked streets among which I found the Palazzo Cenci, still a sprawling

Aaron D. Wolf

Chris Check, Ruth Besemer, and Chilton Williamson, Jr., visit the Colosseum.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pile of masonry but not nearly so forbidding now as when Shelley saw it, the building having been painted a creamy yellow and converted into residential apartments. Only the blackened shadowy arch connecting the two portions of the palace across a narrow cobbled street retains a hint of the monstrous Baroque crimes that occurred here four centuries ago.

From the Palazzo Cenci, I made my way back to the Hotel Forum, between the northern end of the Palatine Hill and the Campidoglio. Except for the tall brick arches set into the hillside beneath the massed green of the cypresses and the darker pines above them, the palaces of the emperors and the ancient Roman aristocracy have to be imagined today. The Forum below the hill was green with January grass and forbs which I hated to be leaving for the snow and ice of Wyoming.

At the hotel that evening, we had a fine Roman feast, with a cocktail pianist thrown in by a generous management. Most of the guests were departing on early flights the next morning, and after the goodbyes had been said, the Rockford Rump Parliament, consisting of all the usual suspects, gathered in the bar downstairs for scotch and to say farewell to Fausto, the indulgent keeper of our livers for the past eight or nine days. I regret to say that I (but not I alone) had too many scotches, got to bed well after midnight, and would have got up at six in the morning with a serious headache had I not, in fact, awoken drunk. I was still drunk when Ray Olson and I arrived together at the airport at nine. Whether it was with last night's scotch or with the haunting, eternal beauty that is Rome, I could not have said.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is the senior editor for books at Chronicles.

Letter From Detroit

by John O'Neill

Field of Schemes

◆

Except for the filming of *61**, the upcoming movie about the home-run race between Yankees Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris in 1961, there was no action last summer at Tiger Stadium. The Detroit Tigers have ditched their historic home at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Trumbull and are entering their second season at their new home, Comerica Park.

Unlike Tiger Stadium, which seated over 50,000, Comerica Park seats roughly 40,000—that including the seating in 100 luxury boxes, 20 more than the franchise said it would have. The team's new home has scarcely a downward angle in the lower deck, making it difficult to see over the heads in the next row. There is also little shade from the sun or shelter from the rain, unless you are in one of the luxury boxes.

There is a Ferris wheel at Comerica Park, visible from southbound I-75, and a carousel with tigers instead of horses. The new ball park has the biggest scoreboard in the major leagues. There is also parking, but it costs $20, which is more expensive than the very few economy seats available.

All of this might have been easier to accept had the public not been forced into paying much of the $240 million construction cost. Detroit-area reporters have praised Tigers' owner Mike Ilitch for covering most of the cost himself, unlike franchise owners elsewhere who practice legal extortion, forcing their hometowns to pay all construction costs. The Tigers, however, were bound by lease to the old stadium. Unlike franchise owners in other cities who really meant it when they gave the taxpayers the ultimatum to build a stadium or lose the team, Ilitch did not have the option to move the Tigers from Detroit.

The press hasn't always favored a new ball park. Tom Monaghan, the previous owner of the Tigers whose staunch Catholicism made him unpopular with the media, was never able to enlist their help to rally for a new stadium. Nor was the late Coleman Young, who served five terms as mayor, and had the most hostile relationship ever between a mayor and local media. After Ilitch bought the team on the eve of the 1992 season and Dennis Archer was elected mayor in 1993, however, the baseball-team owner and the big-city mayor enjoyed a free ride with the local media.

Monaghan's nemesis was the Tiger Stadium Fan Club, whose spokesmen believed that the sale of the team would save the stadium. Ilitch and Archer were both careful and clever enough to pay lip service to examining the option of preserving Tiger Stadium, and the fan club bought into this charade.

They got taken. Archer and Ilitch worked immediately to get all the powers that be lined up behind what would become Comerica Park. In March 1996, Archer arranged a ballot proposal to approve $40 million in city bonds to fund the new ball park—on the same day as the Republican primary. The timing was deliberate: The press's focus on the primary would ensure limited public debate about the ball park, and, because Republicans in Detroit are quite rare, Archer ensured a low voter turnout.

Archer made his pitch for the new ball park in a television ad which aired the weekend before the vote. Singing the praises of a new park, Archer insisted that the best aspect of the plan was that the city would own the new facility. He failed to mention that the city already owned Tiger Stadium.

This was the same Dennis Archer who had refused to take a position the previous August on a ballot proposal to allow casino gaming in Detroit. During that campaign, the mayor had insisted that his position dictated that he not campaign for or against a ballot proposal.

Archer proved to be selective in applying this principle. And why had he made the bizarre assertion in the first place? Because he had pretended to be against casino gaming during the mayoral race in 1993, lest he incur the wrath of the city's religious leaders, whose crucial endorsements only Coleman Young could garner while publicly supporting casino gaming. But it was clear that Archer was giving a wink to the gambling interests, especially when it was revealed during the campaign that he had patronized casinos in Canada.

As a candidate, Archer opposed gambling. In his first term as mayor, he took no position but insisted, most cleverly, that he would fight for Detroit's right to gamble should the proposal pass. After it passed, he vowed to keep casinos off Detroit's scenic and residential riverfront. And now—you guessed it—Archer wants to put casinos on the riverfront.

The interests who pushed for a new stadium were largely those who had also pushed for casinos. Although Archer had admonished the Tiger Stadium Fan Club for having non-resident members, instrumental in the drive for a new park was the Coalition for Jobs and Economic Development, an almost entirely subur-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ban group of wealthy campaign contributors, many of whom supported casino gambling.

Restaurants in Detroit's Greektown had posted campaign signs for both the casino and ball-park initiatives bearing the same slogan, "Detroit Needs Jobs." Leading restaurant owners had bid on one of the gaming licenses with support from both Archer and Council President Gil Hill, despite the fact that these same investors were also delinquent in paying their city taxes. Much to Hill's chagrin, their bid was finally denied due to more serious legal problems back in Greece.

Another interesting connection between the two initiatives is Marian Ilitch, a casino investor and wife of the Tigers' owner. When asked at the 1997 tri-county summit on Mackinac Island about the obvious conflict between ownership in both a casino and a sports franchise, Mayor Archer played the sex card, insisting that the questioner simply disliked the fact that Mrs. Ilitch was a successful woman.

The annual summit is a planning session involving the mayor and executives of Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties. Wayne County Executive Ed McNamara was quite helpful in promoting the new ball park. But no one was more helpful than Gov. John Engler—even though he is a Republican and Archer, a Democrat. Engler funneled $55 million to the project from state funds without voter or legislative approval. The measure got more bipartisan cover when Ingham County Circuit Judge James Giddings (a liberal who had clashed previously with Engler) ruled the governor's action legal.

But there was another glitch yet to be to overcome. Ilitch needed $145 million to complete the project. Although Comerica Bank subsequently bought the right to name the ball park, it could not come to terms with Ilitch over financing his share of the costs, and Ilitch was forced to turn to a Japanese bank. In other words, Comerica pays to advertise at the new ball park, but doubts its worth as an investment. Comerica chief economist David Littman has stated publicly that new sports facilities are of doubtful benefit to the community.

Alas, Comerica Park is the new home of the Detroit Tigers. As the city celebrates its tricentennial this year, it will lack the closest thing to a tourist attraction. It is impossible to overstate Tiger Stadium's history. Having opened as Bennett Park in 1896, it was the oldest home in all of professional sports and the model on which Yankee Stadium was built. Tiger Stadium (called Briggs Stadium at the time) is where Lou Gehrig removed himself from the lineup in 1939, ending his record of consecutive games played. It is also where Denny McLain won his 30th game in 1968, and where Reggie Jackson thrilled the nation with a monster home run into the right-field lights during the 1971 All Star Game.

Meanwhile, a new stadium under construction for the Detroit Lions is being financed by a hotel-and-motel tax, making Detroit even less attractive to visit. (The city did have visitors besides the opposing team when Tiger Stadium was alive and well.) But the demise of Tiger Stadium is more than just a slap in the face to real baseball fans. Comerica Park, albeit a beautiful brick structure, is a breach of public trust.

John O'Neill writes from Detroit.

Letter From Eivissa

by John Carney

Dos mojitos, por favor

◆

A *mojito* is a Cuban mint julep, mixed with rum rather than bourbon. It was Ernest Hemingway's second-favorite drink. The shot of gin first thing in the morning from the bottle beneath the bed took top honors.

Somewhere just on the dark side of dawn in an Eivissa nightclub, I was trying to convince the waitress to deliver another round of *mojitos* because I wanted to continue my conversation with the leggy Catalan brunette sitting beside me on the nightclub's rooftop terrace. The waitress seemed to hear me above the music thundering out of the club and went off to fetch our drinks. I watched her *con permiso* her way through the crowd of good-looking, depraved, and decadent Euro-youth before turning my attention back to my Catalan conversationalist. One thing was certain: We were not the only people on the terrace discussing cocaine and sex.

"Eivissa" is the Catalan spelling of the Mediterranean island that the Spaniards call "Ibiza." Greeks called it the Island of Pines, and rugged pines still rise along the rocky hillsides and shoreline. In the valleys and plateaus, a dusty red soil supports olive, fig, and almond trees that rise in neat rows on farmsteads that look very much as they would have in the time of the Carthaginians who founded Eivissa City.

The newspapers reported that Spanish farmers were planning to join the anti-fuel tax revolt that was spreading across Europe as the summer drew to a close. My brother wrote an article for the *Wall Street Journal Europe* arguing that these weren't truly tax revolts but raids on the state treasuries by special interests. He has a point. The French truckers relaxed their protest when the government promised them a targeted tax rebate, which means more government red tape and doesn't relieve the tax burden on most French drivers. Governments use loopholes, directed tax-cuts, and rebates to grant favors to special interests and to control their citizens. They're really a sneaky form of government intervention in our lives.

A wise man once said, however, that we shouldn't oppose tax loopholes. We should try to expand them, in order to eliminate their favoritism. More generally, we should support anti-tax revolts regardless of what we think of the underlying motives of the protesters. These raids on state treasuries are double blessings: They let people keep what they earn, and they deprive the state of money it would otherwise spend to attack the liberties of the people.

Here in Eivissa, however, it's difficult to imagine that the farmers' protests would have had much effect. Life has a slow pace amidst the red clay and harsh hills, especially beneath the stifling Mediterranean summer sun. If the farmers had brought everything to a halt, I'm not sure anyone would have noticed—unless they blocked the discos at night. That would have caused rioting. In the end, several ships blockaded the Barcelona harbor, but the Catalan olive growers kept on keeping on, tending their trees around the occasional Carthaginian ruin.

The Romans and, later, the Visigoths followed the Carthaginians. Muslims took the island before the turn of the first millennium, and held it for more than 300 years. Eivissa's modern history be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gins with the Christian *Reconquista* sponsored by Juame I of Cataluña and Aragon in 1235, long before NATO bombers got into the business of preventing ethnic cleansing. (A suggested bumper sticker for folks opposed to NATO interventionism: "If NATO Had Got Here Sooner, Your Name Would Be Mohammed.")

Over the next 700 years, the island prospered as a trading hub for Catalan merchants and suffered during the various continental wars. In the 1960's, it attracted the attention of Europe's flower-power set, who discovered that free love and drugs were even more enjoyable on sandy beaches beneath the Mediterranean sun. Tourism boomed, becoming the island's major industry. Its infamous all-night discos gave birth to the rave sometime in the late 80's. Besides the sandy beaches surrounded by sparkling blue waters, Eivissa's nightlife is the reason people come.

The drug of choice among the club-hoppers is ecstasy, a narcotic with the most marketable name imaginable. Reportedly, the drug delivers a mildly good time but doesn't come close to living up to its name. Most users I've met seem disappointed with the effects. I understand that America's drug-war industry is currently throwing a hissy-fit about the ecstasy epidemic supposedly sweeping through America's youth. No doubt some of this is the usual foundation grant-seeking, fundraising, and job-maintenance mania. Still, let me propose this slogan for their abuse-prevention programs: "You'll have more fun with rum."

The young and reckless Europeans in Eivissa hardly confine themselves to ecstasy. During my first day on the island, an attractive group of women passed by the café where I was breakfasting. I smiled at them and said, "*Hola.*" "*Ciao,*" they replied, and kept walking. One suddenly turned around and boldly strode back to where I was sitting. She had the brightest smile, and her walnut eyes gleamed in the morning light. "*Ciao,*" I said.

"*Ciao.* Do you have any hashish or marijuana to sell us?" she asked.

This was the first time I've ever been mistaken for a drug dealer. I felt myself grasping for the proper response. My knowledge of Italian culture is limited: *I promessi sposi*, Dante, Ezra Pound being kept in a cage by the U.S. Army, and what I read about the Lega Nord in *Chronicles*. No help there. Finally, I gave her a conspiratorial grin. "Too many police," I said. I nodded a bit to the group of men sitting in their bathing trunks at the far end of the café. "Talk to me later."

Spain went through a brief period during which most drugs were decriminalized. Pressure from the "international community" put an end to that years ago. One substance banned in most Western countries, however, remains legal in Spain: absinthe. The bane of Victorian society can be found on the shelves of many bars and cafes throughout Spain, but the best is made near Barcelona or on Eivissa. Sometimes called the "green faerie," absinthe is translucent green liquor distilled from wormwood. When mixed with water, it turns a milky, opaque shade of green. It's meant to be drunk slowly, as Jake Barnes discovers in *The Sun Also Rises*. Van Gogh was reportedly high on absinthe when he severed his ear.

My attempt to get a glass of absinthe led to my conversation with the Catalan woman. The bartender was refusing to serve me any because of an incident the night before. There had been a fire; I had started it. Tonight, I could not be served absinthe, the bartender told me.

Drinking absinthe always involves a ritual designed to dissolve sugar into the otherwise bitter liquor. Among the various techniques, the most dramatic requires dipping a sugar cube into the absinthe and lighting it on fire. As the sugar caramelizes, it drips into the glass, where it blends and produces the desired effect. When dripped too quickly, I discovered, the sugar can fall into the glass while still aflame, igniting the absinthe. My attempt to extinguish the fire succeeded only in knocking the glass over. The flaming green liquid streamed across the bar, lapping over the edges, lighting my shoes on fire.

Still, no one was hurt, and I thought I deserved another chance. I proposed mixing the sugar using one of the rituals not involving fire; but the bartender would not be reasoned with.

At that point, the woman beside me spoke up. "May I suggest a *mojito*," she said in Catalan. It was close enough to Spanish for me to understand. In English, she said, "American boys like *mojitos* because they all want to be Hemingway."

I ordered *mojitos* for both of us before telling her that I didn't understand how Hemingway and the rest of the International Brigades had escaped with their reputations intact after fighting for the Stalinist side during the Spanish Civil War. She asked why I was more sympathetic to Franco's Nationalists. I gave three reasons: First, in the government schools where I was educated, Franco's victory was taught as a great tragedy and I regarded this as a *prima facie* case for Franco; second, Franco resisted the sickening secularism that infected European governments, East and West, in the 20th century, upholding the role of faith in public life; and third, if you compare post-Franco Spain with post-Soviet Russia, it is easy to see why Franco is preferable to Stalin.

She replied that to the Catalans, Franco was first and foremost a relentless centralizer, suppressing their identity and language. His military career had taken shape in the long, futile Moroccan campaign, an adventure in Spanish imperialism opposed from the start by both the Catalan merchant class and Barcelona's radical anarchists. As Caudillo, Franco continued his army-bred prejudices against regionalists and nationalists in Cataluña and the Basque territories. National unity was at the heart of Franco's regime, she explained. The Catalan language was banned from schools, Madrid encouraged a million largely poor and unskilled Spaniards to immigrate into Cataluña, and little self-government was tolerated. This argument was far better at winning me over than she could have anticipated: There's no way she could have known that painting Franco as the Spanish Lincoln would have a powerful effect on my thinking.

Since 1979, Cataluña has enjoyed a measure of independence from Madrid. The regional government has more power, and Catalan is taught in the schools, becoming the primary language of the region once again. The devolution of power, however, is far from complete. Madrid continues to control the region, and enriches itself through taxes taken from Cataluña's prosperity. To make matters worse, the devolution may stall as an alliance of socialists, communists, and centralizers have gained power in recent elections by appealing to the immigrant vote—the 40 percent of Cataluña's voters who come from other regions and often resent the resurgence of Catalanism. To have come so far only to turn back would be a genuine tragedy, the Catalan brunette told me.

When we'd finished with Spain's politics, we turned to the United States. She

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was alarmed by President Clinton's recent move to deepen U.S. involvement in Colombia's civil war by delivering $1.3 billion of additional foreign aid to the Bogotá regime. Actually, it's far worse, I told her. Clinton is not merely sending cash that could be easily stolen and, therefore, kept out of the civil war. He's sending attack helicopters, herbicide, and military "advisors" into the Colombian jungle.

Her primary concern was with the impact that the U.S.-backed intensification of the conflict would have on the environment and human rights. No doubt things will get far worse for Colombian farmers, forests, and critics of Colombia's rulers. But, I told her, I worry more about my country getting drawn into this 40-year war between Colombian Marxists and their government opponents. Political violence in the region stretches back into the mid-19th century, and certainly beyond. Once again, it looks like the United States is marching determinately into a foreign bedlam of ancient animosities.

Aid to Colombia is officially "agricultural," intended to assist the Colombian government's eradication of cocaine crops. But the civil war and the drug war are inseparable, since the Marxist insurgents control much of the cocaine crop. In fact, my Catalonian is convinced, what really motivates the Colombian regime is the desire not to eradicate this valuable commodity but to control its distribution while rubbing out the rebels. Even if U.S. aid succeeded in shutting down cocaine production in Colombia, the drug farming would merely migrate to Colombia's neighbors, just as drug dealers in New York City shift their activities from one neighborhood to another to avoid the police.

Recently, the authorities discovered a submarine in the hills of Colombia. According to *Pravda*—sorry, I mean the *Herald-Tribune*, the sub was being built by drug smugglers and could have transported 11 tons of cocaine. The *Herald-Tribune* argued that this strengthened the Clinton administration's position on Colombia. Surely, it should do just the opposite.

This story has all the marks of a setup, including a Russian connection (the instruction manuals for building the submarine were in Russian). And after Kosovo, we should all assume anything we hear supporting American interventionism abroad is a lie. But if this story were true, it would only confirm what we already know: that the situation in Colombia is not an ordinary drug-interdiction program and our aid is not agricultural. We are supplying arms, aid, and advice to one side in a deadly civil war, fought between well-equipped and well-funded armies. As the *Herald-Tribune* put it, typically only navies of sovereign nations possess the sort of submarine supposedly found in the Colombian hills.

My Catalonian friend wanted to know how Clinton, formerly a Vietnam War protester, could possibly want to start America down the road to war in Colombia. Perhaps, she suggested, we should suspect another affair-of-the-pants is giving him this bravado, just as cuddling with Monica Lewinsky gave him the courage to oppose Newt Gingrich during the 1995 government shutdown. I told her that it was more likely typical Clintonian hubris and sophistry. The Clintonites are supremely confident that they are always right, both morally and tactically. And they can talk themselves into any position necessary to advance themselves in power.

In 1994, when the Clinton administration overthrew the government of Haiti, I was at Oxford. Strobe Talbot visited to give a lecture on the role of the United States in the world. The talk was nonsense, and most of the questions were harmless. I raised my hand toward the end, and Talbot announced that mine would be the last question. I produced a copy of the letter Clinton had written from Oxford opposing America's involvement in the internal disputes of sovereign nations, particularly Vietnam. After reading the letter, I asked: "Since Clinton recently launched an invasion force that resulted in the overthrow of the government of Haiti, I'm wondering whether you think he was wrong back in the 60's or is he wrong now?"

I never expected Talbot's reaction. He turned purple with rage. "No dictionary in Oxford would call our installation of the democratically elected leader of Haiti an invasion!" he bellowed. This was an obfuscation: An invasion is an invasion, even if it is justified. (Recall the Allied invasion of Normandy.) But to the Clintonites, the words "war," "invasion," and "attack" are reserved for our official enemies. The United States and our vassals are peacekeepers and democracy-builders. Reality somehow bends to their linguistic connivances. Sex with Monica? It all depends on your definition of "is."

The dons at Oxford were taken aback by Talbot's ill-mannered response; he had dodged the question. I hadn't asked about the definition of "invasion" but about how his boss had gone from articulating the principles of nonintervention and national sovereignty to launching a global crusade for democracy and human rights. Talbot behaved as if such a question were beneath the dignity of his office.

Sensing his answer had been insufficient, Talbot approached me on his way out. I should have been intimidated because armed bodyguards surrounded him. He took my hand in his, giving it a shake. "That was the easiest closing question I've had," he lied. (I could see he was calmer now. His complexion had returned to pasty, though a vein still bulged and pulsed in his neck.) My friends sitting close by could not believe this master of the American hyperpower felt the need to attempt to embarrass a 20-something undergraduate who had asked a troubling question.

I looked into his lying eyes and said, "Go to Hell, a--hole."

Clinton can push us into centuries-old wars in the Balkans and in South America—wars that will only spread to neighboring countries when the catalyst of American power is introduced—because he believes with all his heart that his wars are peace.

The story impressed my Catalan friend. She laughed and touched my arm. Her look made me suspect she only half-believed the details, but she liked the moral of the story. "You're saying that America's rulers are interventionists because they are deluded and evil," she observed.

Now, it was my turn to smile. The *mojitos* arrived. We had talked enough truth about the world for this hour of the morning.

"Oh, John," she said, "Maybe it's not too late to stop it all."

On the eastern edge of the sea, the first fits of sunlight were visible. The breeze blowing onto the terrace was salty and cool. We both took long drinks from our glasses.

"Yes," I said, "Isn't it pretty to think so."

John Carney, an attorney in New York City, is a graduate of the University of Pensylvania Law School.

To Subscribe
1-800-877-5459

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter From London

by Derek Turner

Blair's Ditch Project

◆

Tony Blair's regime manages to be simultaneously comic and tragic, with a slight tilt toward tragedy. The government is made up of chinless Christian Socialists, Anglophobe Scots, aggrieved proletarians, shrewish women, and militant homosexuals—most of whom seem to detest each other. The members of the Cabinet all have grandiose schemes, which tend toward unfeasibility and never work out as planned. It's all very Gilbert and Sullivan.

But this ragtag collection of bores and monomaniacs is now in charge of a real country (thanks to the foolishness of a few thousand swing voters in key constituencies in 1997), and their personal differences fade into insignificance in their joint determination to do away with the last vestiges of British independence, integrity, and identity. The latest skirmish in their inchoate campaign of Anglocide is the Parekh Report.

In February 1998, Home Secretary Jack Straw created the 24-member Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. The Commission is a subdivision of the Runnymede Trust, a race-relations brain trust named—perhaps humorously—after one of the most important places in England, the Thameside meadow where the Magna Carta was signed. The Commission was charged with devising ways in which relations between indigenous Britons and postwar immigrants could be improved, in a formerly placid country that has begun to feel severe intestinal pains thanks to rapid, large-scale immigration of both the legal and illegal varieties, combined with aggressive "multiculturalism" and politically correct censorship. The Commission, said Straw, with an eye on the inner cities, was setting off "with a strong wind. We are going to take it very seriously." The more uterine segments of the press "oohed" and "aahed" in approval.

The deliberations of the Commission were published in a 400-page report in October 2000. Known formally as *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, the findings became generally known as the Parekh Report, after the chairman, Lord Parekh, an Asian peer and political scientist of the ultra-left variety.

A *Daily Telegraph* columnist noted that the job titles of the Commission's members were just like the satirical titles made up by Michael Wharton, the London *Telegraph*'s "Peter Simple," in his prescient columns over 20 years ago. Wharton foretold the growth of a massive, self-perpetuating "race relations industry" at a time when Conservatives were saying such myopic things as "At least it will never get like America over here." Examples of Commission members' job titles include: "research professor at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations"; "chairman of the race relations committee of the Association of Chief Police Officers"; "professor of ethnic health"; "former equal opportunities adviser to the Greater London Council"; "head of equality and diversity policy, Haringey Council"; and "founding commissioning editor for multicultural programmes for Channel 4."

Several things are apparent immediately: First, the Commission is a conservative-free zone, in true "liberal" style. Second, the intellectual caliber of the Commission's members is not the highest. (These are people whose minds were set in aspic, *circa* 1968.) Third, the sort of people who contribute to such reports have little experience of real jobs or even real people beyond their immediate—and, frankly, atypical—circles. Fourth, when one looks at some of the more important people on the commission—many of whom work for the police, in the media, and in serious universities—it becomes clear that p.c. pathology has affected every corner of national life.

Bearing in mind the prejudices of the Commission, the content of the report was predictable. The text was full of gems for connoisseurs of clichés to mine—lots of talk about crossroads, rainbows, multiple identities, being inclusive and diverse, and all the rest of the preachy, glutinous jargon that is customary when discussing such matters. Parts of the report demonstrated how far its authors are removed from reality: "The attitude to asylum-seekers sends a shiver down many spines." That may be true for 24 easily shocked spines, but those who actually come into contact with the hordes of economic opportunists who have come to Britain in massive numbers feel differently—often with good reason.

The section that received the most attention in the press read: "Britishness, as much as Englishness, has systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations. Whiteness nowhere features as an explicit condition of being British but it is widely understood that Englishness, and therefore by extension, Britishness, is racially coded." The implication is somewhat amusing: Do, say, "French," "Nigerian," or "Indian" lack racial connotations? To avoid the newly offensive word "British," the report suggested that a blander collective noun might be used "similar in power to the unifying word 'Nordic' in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden." A racialist term such as "Nordic" is "unifying"? Houston Stewart Chamberlain, thou shouldst be living at this hour!

The tabloids claimed that the report deemed the concept of "Britishness" to be racist. This characterization is slightly unfair, as the extract shows, but the tabloids were only anticipating the real views of the authors, to whom "racial" and "racism" are virtually indistinguishable. The same section of the report went on to say that

> Race is deeply entwined with political culture and with the idea of nation and underpinned by a distinctively British kind of reticence—to take race or racism seriously or even to talk about them is bad *form, not done in polite company.* Unless these deep-rooted antagonisms to racial and cultural difference can be defeated in practice, as well as symbolically written out of the national story, the idea of a multicultural post-nation remains an empty promise.

Other segments of the report declared that British history should be rethought, reconsidered, or jettisoned completely—presumably to be replaced by fireside chats and bedtime stories about racism.

The report made over 100 recommendations that would help the authors perpetrate their scheme to erase Britain. These included suggestions that Britain be formally declared a multicultural society by the government, that an all-encompassing Equality Act be passed to cover all forms of unlawful discrimination, that a Human Rights Commission be created, that vouchers for asylum seekers be abolished and full appeal rights against deportation granted, that "citizen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ship education" should include human-rights principles and "understanding of equality difference." The granting of broadcasters' licenses would be made dependent upon having a suitable quota of minority employees and running propaganda about "cultural diversity," while political parties should have an ethnic "audit" of members. Educational authorities would be required to keep detailed statistics on ethnicity; equality and diversity awareness would be incorporated into teacher training at all levels; and steps would be taken to reduce the disproportionately high number of black children suspended or expelled from school. (These children are never expelled or suspended because of their behavior, of course, but because of "institutional racism.")

Upon publication of the report, Home Office Minister Mike O'Brien said that it "adds much to the current debate on multi-ethnic Britain," and Home Office jobsworths drafted a 40-page response. But then the *Daily Telegraph* galloped into the breach, with a banner headline accusing Jack Straw—with considerable justification—of wanting to "rewrite history," and the back-tracking began. Publicly stung, Straw was compelled actually to read the report; to the surprise of its authors, he delivered a very different speech at the formal launch than they had expected. This time, he was thinking of the middle-class constituencies. He argued that the Commission was "grudging" in accepting what had been achieved and said that he "strongly parted company" with them over their definition of Britishness. Leftists are wrong, he said, for "washing their hands of the whole notion of nationhood," and the report was "sub-Marxist."

The report and the Straw climb-down were satirized in the magazine *Private Eye*, which listed "The great and good who make up the Runnynose Commission, authors of *Britain Don't You Hate It? The Future of Multiculture*." They added caustically: "Mr Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, wishes to make clear after reading adverse press comment on the above, that he had nothing whatever to do with the Runnyegg report which is now all over his face. Mr. Straw is proud to be British and has no intention of implementing a report which he merely commissioned and promised to implement."

But the report's authors defended it, though many seemed cowed by the ferocity of the counterattack. One of the problems about being part of an insular elite is that you tend to lose sight of the wider picture, thinking that everyone else is just like your friends and associates. The most spirited defense of the report came from the winsome Lady Gavron, "vice-chair" of the Commission, whose husband was coincidentally made a life peer after becoming a major donor to the Labour Party (although Lady Gavron is naturally a member of the Commission on her own merits). Speaking at a press conference, she said that "It would have been great if Prince Charles had been told to marry someone black. Imagine what message would have been sent out." She added that Charles' stated wish to be "defender of faiths" rather than just the head of the Church of England did not go far enough. The royal family is "a symbol of our unmeritocratic tendency and, of course, they're all white. It is part of a rather unattractive hierarchy." (Her distaste for hierarchy does not seem to require that she eschew her title.) She decried the hereditary principle, saying that one wouldn't run a cricket team on that basis. The response of any cricket fans present was not recorded, but it seems at least possible that such a tactic might improve the English team's performance.

Lady Gavron then switched targets, attacking the Church of England. "[Y]ou immediately assume that [a vicar] will be a white man rather than a black woman." When a reporter responded that this is because most vicars *are* white and male, she replied, "That's the kind of perception we want to change." (Incidentally, the press recently reported that the archbishops of Canterbury and York plan to attend a 24-hour residential workshop designed to rid themselves of "institutional racism." Who says the age of martyrdom is over?)

In a fit of generosity, Lady Gavron did allow that we could keep the name of Trafalgar Square because "if you got rid of everything associated with something bad you'd have nothing at all."

The Parekh Report sets out explicitly what many on the left have long believed: There is no such thing as Britain; even if there is, it is intrinsically evil and should be replaced by ever-shifting "communities" made up of people united by geographical propinquity, "lifestyle," and shopping habits (unless the people concerned are nonwhite, in which case they can unite themselves with whatever atavistic myth they like).

The Parekh Report has rather embarrassed the Blair government, which wishes to distance itself from its new militant tendency. Although the government's members basically agree with it, the report is a little too honest for professional politicians to wish to associate themselves with it.

In the run-up to a general election in a country where there is a strong conservative press and whose electors pride themselves (rightly or wrongly) on their independence of mind, it would be a brave government indeed which sought to replace Great Britain with "a multicultural post-nation." For the moment, Blair and his fractious team will continue the pretense of being "patriots" who have the national interest at heart. Unfortunately, even after Parekh let the cat out of the bag, there are people—enough, perhaps, to decide an election—who will believe them.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right NOW!, *published in London.*

Letter From Cortina

by Andrei Navrozov

Roman Holiday

◆

Sometimes, though not very often, one has the occasion to discover that, deep down beneath the surface, things are actually better than they seem. Some years ago, when she was unequivocally and irresponsibly young, my English friend Natasha G— came to stay with her godfather, Franco Zeffirelli, at his villa in Positano, where a newly famous Russian called Misha Baryshnikov was also a houseguest. With her godfather's blessing *in loco parentis*, Misha started inviting the teenage daughter of a peer of the realm to nightclubs and discotheques, and eventually fell madly in love with her. Recently, I asked Natasha why she had so cruelly broken the openly heterosexual heart of the Nijinsky of our epoch. "Well, you see," she remembered with visible distaste, "he kept asking me out, and I just hated the way he danced. It was *really* embarrassing."

The moral of the story will arrive later. Though I write this crouching behind a hotel-room desk in Rome on what feels

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like a warm spring afternoon, with the Forum's white marble bones showing through the open window like the bleached skeleton of some unlamented casualty of social evolution, my mind keeps turning back to Cortina, with all that rude good health, sparkling with snow and brimming with mulled wine. I have just come back, after two weeks of pretending to ski alongside the Romans who make this Alpine village what it is: a wintertime watering hole for those apparently uncomplicated individuals who believe that social evolution is not something to worry about when one can drip with diamonds, swathe yourself in furs, and eat veal cutlets with fresh artichokes in the bar of the Hotel de la Poste instead. In short, modern Romans, not unlike their ancient ancestors who sold prized specimens of hog outside my hotel window, like to enjoy themselves. This they do in Cortina.

From the perspective of Venice, which is only an hour and a half away by car, Cortina belongs to Rome the way Aspen belongs to New York, the City of London belongs to Wall Street, and art belongs to the Muses. Venetians see the place as a playground of the great Roman *cafone*—a boor, bounder, lout, *arriviste*, and cad, a cross between Shakespeare's Falstaff and a New Russian, with a chromosomal admixture of the Essex Man and a genetic pinch of the Bridge and Tunnel. "God, those clowns!" my friend Giovanni exclaims, with a smile bitter as wormwood. "You should watch them eat. How they eat! Like marathon swimmers, face to the right. *Ha-a-a-rgh!* Then face to the left. *Ha-a-a-rgh!* And then you see them *coming up for air.*" His portrayal is accurate, and in the aforementioned bar of the Poste, one can still watch live the orgiastic scenes I remember witnessing in places such as Al Moro, not far from the Quirinale, in the days before Rome started to persecute its crooks as hypocritically as it had once persecuted its Christians.

Outside the habitat he has colonized, such as Cortina in winter and the Costa Smeralda in summer, the *cafone* sticks out like a sore thumb. A few months ago, I went to the Palafenice—the temporary structure at Tronchetto meant to stand in for Venice's old Gran Teatro La Fenice until all the money for its reconstruction has been stolen—to hear Angela Brown in Verdi's *Requiem*:

> Libera me, Domine, de morte
> aeterna,
> in die illa tremenda,
> quando caeli movendi sunt et
> terra . . .

When the performance was over, and the audience started leaving the theater, we saw that Venice had flooded. As though conjured up by the music, *aqua alta* had come in on cue, and getting home—at any rate without rubber boots up to your ears—was out of the question until the water receded. How long this would take—30 minutes or three hours—was anyone's guess. Standing next to me in the crowd was a Roman couple, instantly recognizable by the Hermès orange of his scarf and the purple mink of her coat, who would surely have brought to any mind more socially restive than mine the lush English expression "pigs in clover." And the sow—I mean, the woman—was furious. "How long is this going to take?" she kept asking. As I say, nobody knew the answer. Finally, as her exasperation reached a climax, she shrieked with a fury surpassing the *Dies irae* we had just heard: "Somebody, please call *Rome*!" As you or I might have said, in slightly different circumstances: "Switchboard, put me through to *Lubyanka*!"

This, then, is the ugly side of holidaying in Cortina, at least from the Venetian point of view. But as the story of my princess and the frog with whom she refused to dance illustrates, the moral nexus between repulsive appearance and charming essence is knotted the Gordius way even in children's fairy tales. In real life, one must try to dig ever deeper, and when I go to Cortina, as I have now done for about ten Christmases running, I go with the intention of watching the Romans do what they no longer can in Rome, and of admiring them.

Consider the dynamics of social interaction—ideally, from the expensive vantage point of the open-air terrace of the Poste, dry martinis $15, olives included—between old acquaintances. These can really only be described with recourse to a furrier's specialist terminology, and I know that nobody is going to believe me, but if a 50-year-old woman is wearing a three-quarter-length Canadian sable by Ferre, then the friend she happens to bump into on the terrace will be wearing a coat of the same fur and of the same length. So if it's chinchilla worked in asymmetrical swirls, then chinchilla worked in asymmetrical swirls it's going to be—just have a drink, wait for a couple of minutes, pop a green olive in your mouth . . . Well, what'd I tell you? There's her friend, coming round the corner in white apres-ski boots with CHANEL on them. Chinchilla! Asymmetrical swirls!

"*Ciao cara*, you always look wonderful in that." "Hello darling, and you in that." Come to think of it, the people here don't have friends; they have mirror reflections. They don't have thoughts and conversations; they have furriers and jewelers. But now, just before the second martini, is the time to ask: Is that bad? Is it really better to conform to the global rule of "be yourself" and "be what you want to be," which, of course, has been promulgated in order to ensure maximum homogeneity the world over, a homogeneity of militant pseudoindividualism veiling all classes and conditions of men with a denim pall, or is it better to rebel as the people in this alpine oasis do, to live like a *cafone* among the *cafoni*, to be with your own kind, to move in the company of your own ethical and aesthetic doubles, and feel no shame?

They tremble at the thought of wearing furs in Aspen. In New York, they buy fake pearls from Kenneth Lane. Nobody in St. Tropez remembers how a dry martini is mixed. Does this make their social twins any less identical? Does it make their lives less predictable, more introspective, more subtle? Do we really suppose that the German woman in a nylon parka with fake fur trim talking to her friend in jeans and a sheepskin vest about the political situation in the Middle East—and *not even once* addressing her as "darling"—is any less of a fake bitch, and would have any more interesting things to say, than the splendid Roman *cafona* now traversing the field of vision in front of my table? Waiter, I'll have another. I want to toast the magnificent conformity of this stubborn microcosm of yours.

And again I return to the story of my friend and her putative lover. Had the world's greatest dancer possessed but the smallest share of the rebellious stubbornness of these Romans in Cortina, he would have taken her to the ballet instead. Natasha Baryshnikova! Now, that has a ring to it. I think I shall send her a postcard.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE'S
FOURTH ANNUAL SUMMER SCHOOL
"The American Midwest"
July 24-28, 2001

Dr. Thomas Fleming
President of The Rockford Institute and editor of *Chronicles*

William Mills
Author of *The Arkansas: An American River* and the forthcoming *Black Sea Sketches*

Justin Raimondo
Founding editor of *Antiwar.com*, author of *Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement* and *Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard*

Scott P. Richert
Executive editor of *Chronicles*, M.A. in political theory from The Catholic University of America

Aaron D. Wolf
Assistant editor of *Chronicles*, M.A. in church history from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Chilton Williamson, Jr.
Senior editor, books for *Chronicles*, novelist and author of five books, including *The Immigration Mystique: America's False Conscience*

on

Sinclair Lewis, Booth Tarkington, Louis Bromfield, Sterling North, Laura Ingalls Wilder

and

Robert La Follette, William Jennings Bryan, Robert Taft

and other

Progressives, Populists, Copperheads, and America Firsters

Featured Writers and Poets:

Louis Bromfield
Hamlin Garland
Booth Tarkington
Glenway Wescott
Laura Ingalls Wilder
Sherwood Anderson
Ernest Hemingway
Ole Rölvaag
Sinclair Lewis
Sterling North
Edgar Lee Masters
Vachel Lindsay
Hart Crane

Special dinner events:

Presentation of The Rockford Institute's Third Good and Faithful Servant Award to one of today's great Midwesterners

and

An evening with **Anthony Bukoski**
Professor of Midwestern literature at the University of Wisconsin, Superior
America's leading chronicler of the Polish-American experience
Author of the short-story collections *Children of Strangers* and *Polonaise*

N.B. Registration is limited.
All prices increase $50.00 after June 15.
Prices do not include books on the reading list.

Beautiful riverfront accommodations at Rockford's premier hotel:
Cliffbreakers Convention Center
(includes breakfast)

Please enroll me in THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE'S Third Annual Summer School

- ☐ Full Registration ($450.00)—includes tuition, lodging (double occupancy), and daily dinner
- ☐ Full Registration, Single Occupancy ($550.00)
- ☐ Commuter Registration ($195.00) tuition only
  Commuter Registration plus daily dinner ($295.00)
- ☐ I cannot attend, but I want the Summer School to be a success.
  Enclosed is my contribution of $_____
  (For a gift of $500.00 or more, we'll send you a complete set of the Summer School Audiotapes.)
- ☐ Please send me a brochure.

Name(s)_____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Please mail form with check to: The Rockford Institute • 928 North Main Street • Rockford, Illinois 61103
Questions? Call Christopher Check at (815) 964-5811

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Srdja Trifkovic

Sharon's Victory and U.S. Policy in the Middle East

With the landslide victory of Ariel Sharon in the Israeli general election on February 6, it is obvious that America needs to reevaluate its policy in the Middle East. A revised policy should be based on three key premises.

First, Israel is a small foreign country. It is a friendly and democratic country, but by no means "special" to America or "central" to its interests.

Second, resurgent Islam is a major threat to America's global security and, in the longer term, to the survival of our civilization. U.S. foreign policy should avoid creating conditions which would further its rise, including the perception of a permanent bias in Middle Eastern affairs that breeds anti-Americanism.

Third, American national interests in the Middle East are primarily economic. It is vitally important to the United States to have permanent access to secure and affordable sources of energy. It is not vitally important whose flag flies over the Dome of the Rock, any more than whose flag flies over Pristina. American interests demand a lasting, stable peace that should be based on scrupulously evenhanded treatment of the various parties' claims and aspirations.

This approach would also serve American interests by enhancing Israeli security. Forcing Israel to diversify and enhance its external relations and to reduce its excessive dependence on the United States would make it better equipped to survive in an inherently unfriendly environment. "The people of Israel have lived for 3700 years without a strategic memorandum with America and will continue to live without it for another 3700 years," said the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin almost two decades ago. The present U.S.-Israeli symbiosis is not inherent to Israel's existence. The Jewish state came into being against many odds, and it fought three wars quite successfully before the present "special relationship" finally ripened after the Six Day War of 1967. Foreign policy is a form of adaptive behavior aimed at preserving and enhancing the security of a state. Being perceived as a permanent American client state, and—worse still—perceiving itself as such, is bad for Israel because it distorts the adaptive pattern. Overreliance on the United States limits Israel's room to maneuver diplomatically and militarily, and this may become apparent during Prime Minister Sharon's tenure if American and Israeli strategies diverge.

Sharon is a 19th-century-style nationalist and, as such, seems culturally odious to the postnationalist elites who run "the West." He belongs to the tradition of Begin and Itzhak Shamir, two former prime ministers who insisted on the unity of the land of Israel, including "Judea and Samaria," i.e., the West Bank. This concept is at odds with the "land for peace" approach, the cornerstone of American policy. Begin and Shamir were prepared to offer territorial concessions, specifically returning occupied territories in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights to Egypt and Syria. The true objective of those concessions was always the same, however: to gain time to build settlements in the West Bank, the territories that really mattered to them and which their present heir has no real intention of relinquishing.

George W. Bush seems to share his father's doubts about Israel's usefulness as a "strategic asset." Israel's media image, after months of bloodshed, is at a lower point than at any time in living memory. Sharon will need to reach out to other partners and allies. A reappraisal of U.S. foreign policy may turn out to be the best favor America has ever done for Israel. If it were forced to diversify the sources of its political, economic, and military support, Israel would be safer than it is today. It should not wait for American hegemony in the region to be challenged—say, by Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons—because then the limits of symbiosis may become rapidly (and, for the Israelis, painfully) obvious.

American policymakers must realize that the conflict in the Middle East is neither unique nor incomprehensible outside of its own terms of reference. It is structurally comparable to that between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, or between Orangemen and Nationalists in Ulster. It is a zero-sum dispute, with one side's gain rightly seen as another's loss.

Demystifying the relationship between America and Israel and redefining it in terms of mutual interests will help Israel mature into a "normal" nation-state. Its real security concerns after 1948, and especially after 1967, were aggravated by subjugation to a traditional *Weltanschauung* predicated upon the premise that the world is inherently hostile. Overdependence on the United States in the past three decades has postponed the squaring of this complex circle. The United States must understand the causes of that insecurity from without—by scrutinizing the underlying structure of the Middle Eastern conflict—rather than pander to its symptoms from within by an undissenting acceptance of a "moral" burden. One consequence would be the termination of our unhealthy, costly, open-ended, and practically unconditional financial support for Israel.

The new U.S. national-security team needs to quit thinking about the Middle East in terms of the "peace process" and start viewing it through the lens of conflict analysis. They should be aware that there are problems that may not have a solution, that long-term management is perhaps the best we can hope for, and that the desirability of any possible solution depends on how well it serves clearly defined American geopolitical, economic, and diplomatic interests.

This long overdue reexamination of strategy demands not only new substance but also new style and personnel. Our pretense of neutrality must be discarded in favor of cool evenhandedness, in the Middle East and everywhere else. Emotional commitment to one of the parties in the dispute, and difficulty distinguishing between one's personal and professional involvement, is unhealthy in American diplomats. It would be deemed poor form, and even poorer politics, to send Serbian-Americans to negotiate for the United States on Kosovo and Bosnia, or Greek-Americans to negotiate on Cyprus. Upholding the Golden Rule means that America should come first to Americans, Israel to Israelis, and Palestine to Palestinians. Beyond that, there can be no inherent "special relationships," only special-interest groups and special agendas.

c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GOVERNMENT

Your Tax Dollars at Work

by Philip Jenkins

Rumor has it that the Brookings Institution is a well-regarded think tank staffed by highly educated experts, whose opinions are treated with great respect by the nation's policymakers. Unfortunately, these experts do not inhabit the same spiral arm of the galaxy as the rest of us. I base this conclusion on a widely publicized report released by Brookings at the end of last year on "Government's Greatest Achievements of the Past Half Century." Looking back at the last 50 years or so, most of us would have our own list of the greatest hits of the federal government, and there would be some patches of laughter amidst the tears and woe (the drug war, Vietnam, Waco—there is just so much to choose from). I seriously doubt, though, whether anyone would, with a straight face, begin such a retrospective with a line like

> Looking back from the edge of a new millennium, it is difficult not to be proud of what the federal government has tried to achieve these past fifty years. Name a significant domestic or foreign problem over the past half century and the federal government made some effort to solve it . . . The proof is in the federal statutes. All totaled, Congress passed more than 500 major laws between 1944 and 1999 to improve the quality of life in the nation and world.

Most of us would probably choose a less triumphalist approach, such as "True, government did all this, but let's forgive and forget." It's "difficult not to feel proud" of federal achievements, eh? Just watch me.

Interestingly, though, the Brookings Institution is not alone in its phantasmagoric universe. Seeking confirmation of its views, the babbling Brooksters conducted a survey of college educators from the American Historical Association and the American Political Science Association, asking them to rank the government's achievements since World War II. A very large number of the professors responded, permitting the compilation of a list of federal "triumphs" (I'm not joking—that's the word used in the Brookings press releases). Heading the roster were: "Rebuild Europe after World War II"; "Expand the right to vote"; "Promote equal access to public accommodations"; "Reduce disease." (The full report is online at *www.brook.edu/comm/reformwatch/rw02/rw2.htm*.)

So much is wrong with this survey that it's difficult to know where to start denouncing it. What strikes me the most is the mindset of the academics involved. I am a professor myself, and some of my best friends are professors, so I realize that some of them are not the brightest stars on their respective Christmas trees. But I am still stunned to find so many of them accepting uncritically the most extreme claims of radical liberalism about modern American history, in the face of so much massive evidence to the contrary. The worst thing about the Brookings survey is that it demonstrates beyond challenge the moral and political coloring of the American academy—and it is a pretty sorry sight. To quote Paul Light, director of the survey, "this sample offers an important glimpse of how future generations will judge the greatest achievements of the twentieth century, if only because most of these respondents will be doing the teaching." (My God, he's probably right.)

The greatest problem with the survey is that the answers were predetermined by the nature of the questions. Respondents were offered a number of options as areas in which the federal government had been active, but were not allowed to say that this field of endeavor might have been wholly disastrous or counterproductive. Improving access to public accommodations, for instance, may be a worthy goal; but trying to achieve educational equality by means of busing virtually destroyed urban public education across the United States and gravely damaged opportunities for all races. Such results, however, are labeled mere blips—just spots on the sun—and ignored. Once ordered by rank, the resulting list allows the Brooksters to state, in effect, that this league table represents the judicious views of American scholars about the wonders wrought by the federal government.

This picture involves sins of omission as well as commission. Notably, it suggests that any kind of progress since the 1940's has been the work not just of government, but specifically the U.S. government. States and cities do not count—nor does science, nor business. If disease has been reduced, or water quality improved, that has nothing to do with the workings of private corporations, nor of scientific discoveries; it is because the U.S.G. decided of its goodness that its lowly subjects needed such boons, and lo, they descended. (*Response*: "Let us give thanks to the G, from whom all good things flow"). Interestingly, the biggest single federal effort to reduce disease remains the war on cancer originally declared by President Nixon, and that has been less than a scintillating success.

As to sins of omission, I can think of a number of federal achievements that are not on the list and which should be highlighted, and I have no doubt that *Chronicles* readers could offer their own suggestions. If, for instance, we are to focus on the reconstruction of Europe—undoubtedly a key achievement—why not devote equal time to the amazing reconstruction of Japan? This could be reckoned an even nobler work, since this country was not required to go through the inconvenience of confronting its monstrously bloody wartime past, its record of rape and massacre across eastern Asia. The U.S. government saw no need to remove all those experienced and ever-so-useful militarists, war profiteers, and biological-warfare experts who contributed so much to the new democratic nation.

The mention of Japan might recall other key federal achievements, such as the decision to permit that nation's industrial dumping to cripple large sections of the American economy between the 1960's and 80's. Such a decision seems incomprehensible, at least until we realize how many American politicians and bureaucrats were personally enriched by the policy. The federal government has been a productive cash cow, and it is only fair to stress this record of multibillion-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dollar corporate enrichment in any list of federal achievements. Many countries talk about how desirable it is to transfer wealth, but the United States has actually done it, albeit in the wrong direction. Why be so modest?

Among the other federal triumphs, I would place many of the consequences of the civil-rights revolution, a complex and well-intentioned movement that certainly achieved much good. But it also changed American society irrevocably by destroying any pretense of states' rights and federalism, federalizing law enforcement, and destroying the ancient prohibition on double jeopardy ("That jury may have acquitted you, but wait till we hit you with civil-rights charges"). Above all, the civil-rights revolution created an ever-spreading network of legally defined rights that demand to be enforced by litigation. Although these rights were originally defended for an authentically oppressed segment of the population, the notion soon diffused across society into the realms of women's rights, gay rights, disability rights, and so on. Since the 1940's, the resulting litigation explosion has transformed every aspect of the nation's life and thought and resulted in a fundamental shift of power from legislators to judges. Arguably, this movement has changed the nature of American democracy from the concept of individual rights to one of group rights. Give the federal government its due for such sweeping achievements.

As the Brookings report rightly stresses, federal efforts have affected ordinary people in their everyday lives. I would place much more weight, though, on federal efforts against crime. The professors surveyed rated efforts to "reduce crime" only at number 36 out of 50—not surprisingly, since that endeavor has been such a mind-boggling failure. By any statistical measure, crime has exploded since the 1940's, and prison populations have taken off into the stratosphere. I am not being inconsistent here by trying to blame the federal government for forces which were, to some extent, beyond its control: The feds were not to blame for the demographic changes which underlie so much crime. I can, however, blame them freely for deliberate policies that made the consequences of that trend so much worse: the fads in policing that resulted in cops being taken off the beat *en masse* just as crime rates were beginning to soar; the drug war that has criminalized and incarcerated two generations of urban Americans, creating a new and profitable class of state-supervised helots; and a full-fledged militarization of policing that might have been justified as a response to a popular insurrection, but which has no place in what is still, ostensibly, a democracy. You say "triumph"; I say "social catastrophe."

Among the *embarras des horreurs* offered by Brookings, I am particularly struck by the last three items on the list, those federal "endeavors" that our academics think are the very least important, namely, "Reform taxes"; "Control immigration"; "Devolve responsibility to the states." Each item offers a great deal of food for thought, revealing that respondents clearly do not believe in lowered or reformed taxes, any restrictions on immigration, or any role for the states in what we humorously term our "federal" system. The liberal groupthink of academe is as solid, and as stultifying, as ever.

For me, the crowning glory of this section is the phraseology of the question about "devolving responsibility to the states." The people surveyed were professional historians and political scientists: Could none of them see what was wrong with this? If an undergraduate used such a phrase, I would wince, and then explain, as simply as possible, that a country such as France or Britain might talk of devolving responsibility, but such an idea is totally alien here. Why do you think we call it the *United States*?

Sometimes, surveys are not only unnecessary and misleading, but fundamentally insulting in their conceptualization. Reading the Brookings report, I imagined robbers leaving a bank, taking care to hand out survey forms to each person present, to be filled in when the victims had untied themselves. The survey would address such points as the speed and efficiency of the robbery, the cleanliness of the weapons used, and clarity of commands ("Did you feel that the phrase 'Freeze, don't nobody move!' was well enunciated?" "Overall, how would you rate your victimization experience"). And if a robber dropped a bag of loot while running out, an additional question could be included about his effectiveness in giving (or devolving) money to the bank. This idea may sound whimsical, but compared to the Brookings Institution's effort, it's sweet sanity.

Philip Jenkins is the author, most recently, of Hidden Gospels: How the Quest for Jesus Lost Its Way *(Oxford University Press).*

SOCIETY

Kitchen Table Warriors

by Jeff Minick

Whenever my family gathers together—usually at Thanksgiving or New Year's, and nearly always in the rambling old home belonging to my wife and me in Waynesville, North Carolina—the conversation commences before the engines of the arriving cars have cooled in the driveway. This talk, which I have come privately to regard as the Great Conversation, inevitably takes place around our kitchen table. The Great Conversation is loose, flowing, intense; like one of the nearby Smoky Mountain streams, it moves swiftly, takes unexpected courses, and occasionally smacks against a rock. In half an hour, we can touch on topics ranging from Bill Clinton's bombing of Kosovo to the meaning of sacramental grace in everyday life, delving deep here, skimming the surface there, pausing only to fill coffee cups, pop open beer cans, or settle affairs between our children. Throughout the day and late into the night, the Great Conversation rolls, a weekend-long marathon during which breaks occur only for sleep and the participants come and go as they please. During the past two decades, our poor kitchen table has absorbed a few beatings, scores of tears, thousands of laughs, and hundreds of thousands of words.

Six of us are siblings—three brothers and three sisters. Along with our spouses, all of whom leap into these verbal brawls without a moment's hesitation, we form a diverse group. Religiously, Protestants predominate, though one brother has converted to Judaism (Reformed) and I became Roman Catholic about six years ago. Politically, the last 12 years have seen us cast ballots for the Republicans, the Democrats, the Libertarians, the Reform Party, and possibly the Communists (my brother is vague about that one). Our occupations are as diverse as our politics, running the social and economic gamut from Episcopalian priest, banker, and chemist to bookseller, auto-parts salesman, and pizza deliveryman. Each of the six families has at least two chil-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dren. Each family is involved in a particular church or temple. Each adult volunteers in church or community organizations in some capacity. And each of us is highly opinionated.

Only once in a long while do we agree on anything. One such extraordinary event occurred on Thanksgiving Day, 1999, during a lull in the conversation. My sister Penny looked around the quiet table and asked with perfect innocence: "So does everyone think O.J. was guilty?"

There was a silence short as a breath while we tried to summon up O.J. after these several years, and then simultaneously we burst into laughter. Guilty? O.J.? Did anyone doubt it? Not at that table—not the theologically liberal Episcopalian priest, not the Catholic bookseller, not any of the other five people. Of course, we disagreed on why he escaped justice—he was black, he was wealthy, he was a celebrity. "But at least," Penny said, "we agreed on something."

Our rare consensus, garnered from so jumbled a set of religious and political opinions, led me into a reflective mood that lasted the rest of the day. Listening to the kitchen table talk, participating in a half-dozen other conversations—the presidential election, homosexuality in the Christian churches, problems in public schools, and so on—I was struck by our acceptance of certain events and practices that would once have shocked most Americans. No one appeared dismayed at O.J.'s return to society. We expressed no sense of outrage at the deaths of his victims. Later in the conversation, several relatives stated firmly that Christianity needed to accept homosexuality. Two of them defended both the silly *The Last Temptation Of Christ* and the Brooklyn Museum's portrait of the Virgin Mary, caked with elephant dung and surrounded by renditions of various sexual organs, against what they called "attacks by fundamentalists."

What we had done, I realized after several hours of listening, was to confuse a willingness to tolerate with a willingness to accept. Tolerance, which does not bind its bestower in any way except to turn a blind eye, is no longer enough for our custodians; the grinding machinery of our society, the media, and the courts now demands that all of us embrace beliefs which we once might have spurned or intently questioned, behavior which many formerly regarded as morally corrupting or obscene. To buck this prevailing trend is to be regarded as a hater of humanity and as a possible candidate for social and public excommunication or, depending on the case, for jail.

That day, I also understood for the first time how these demands for tolerance and acceptance are intimately connected with the impotence which so many feel regarding our government and society at large. My relatives center their lives on their families, their work, their churches, their communities. We didn't need Colin Powell to tell us to volunteer; all of us at that kitchen table, inspired by the examples of parents and teachers when we were children, work as Sunday School teachers, soccer and basketball coaches, soup-kitchen workers, scout leaders. But the dominant feeling at the table was that our national government no longer listens to us, that our cities will sprawl no matter what we do, that our education system is broken and can't be fixed. A niece commented offhandedly that, in 50 years, white people would be a minority in our country.

"Do you know why they'll be a minority?" I asked her. When she shook her head, I said, "It's immigration. Legal and illegal immigration. Your own government is the cause."

Everyone at the table sat quietly for just a moment, then switched to another subject. So maybe it's not just helplessness. Maybe toleration and acceptance lead to a willed blindness, a closing of the eyes, a turning away from truth

Such insights may be collected by anyone who reads certain magazines. What was new for me that day was that the lessons were being taught to me by my own flesh and blood. We seemed to have lost our foundations. Years of exposure to the media, to foolish professors and lying politicians and sarcastic comedians in all walks of life, had visibly impaired our critical abilities and damaged our belief in our capacity to make a difference in the world.

Were we powerless? Could we no longer make a difference? The lineaments of my own life certainly seemed to preclude me from affecting wider debates in our society. I am a husband and a father of four, an independent bookseller, always strapped for cash and for time, a hard worker, a man who sits on occasion at a kitchen table in a little town mulling over the problems of the big world. Should I resign myself to the forces of false toleration and bitter resignation that seem to possess so many of our citizens these days?

Not at all. After mulling over my holiday observations and my own peculiar involvement in the world, I realized that there are many weapons at the disposal of what we might call "Kitchen Table Warriors." The following are my personal recommendations for a "Kitchen Table Warrior's Manifesto."

Read, read, read. Read solid books. Read magazines like the one you hold in your hands right now. Read magazine articles in which you disagree with the author. Make connections. It is appalling how little professionals, particularly men, read. They may talk a great game, but a few questions reveal their empty-headedness; they live by opinion rather than by fact, by prejudice rather than by knowledge.

Think. Consider seriously what you believe and why you believe it. If you are going to be a defender of a cause, then you need to articulate your defense. Why do you support the Second Amendment? Why do you oppose abortion? Where do you stand on censorship? These questions deserve your grave consideration. Knee-jerk conservatives deserve the same contempt as knee-jerk liberals.

Speak out and encourage others to do the same. Write a letter to a politician or an editor, but don't stop there. Call a friend—call five friends, for that matter—and ask each to dash off a note as well. Every additional letter adds amazing power to the punch of your protest. Truth will out, the adage runs, but truth needs voices to speak it.

Ask questions. Last year, I heard a college student at the University of North Carolina, Asheville, ask author Os Guiness how students could combat the left-wing political agenda that dominates their classes. "Ask questions," Mr. Guiness replied. "Ask serious questions. And keep asking them." If your parish priest begins tinkering with the Mass, ask him why. If you object to the language or morality of a book assigned to your high-schooler in English class, make an appointment with the teacher and ask questions. Leave your anger out of the discussion; simply ask.

Use humor. Humor can reveal the ridiculous attitude of our opponents. My brother Chris once took his daughters to see Ringling Brothers in nearby Asheville. As he approached the entrance, an animal-rights protester stepped toward him and said, "Don't go inside—they're tormenting those animals." My

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brother pointed to the man's leather sandals, and said, "You're wearing animals on your feet," and then slipped past the speechless protester.

Humor may also help make our point in a civilized way. One of my former college professors—a pacifist, a supporter of liberal causes, an outspoken homosexual—remained my good friend until his recent death. Both of us eventually realized that our shared sense of humor allowed us to keep alive both our friendship and an ongoing political discussion that was healthy for each of us.

Pick your battles. Pace yourself. Focus your efforts. Limited by time, talent, and financial considerations, kitchen-table warriors need to husband their resources. Some issues are too trivial for pursuit. By arguing at every juncture, you risk exchanging your reputation as a sincere and thoughtful advocate for that of neighborhood crank. Furthermore, involvement in some situations is a waste of time. If Uncle Billy voted twice for Bill Clinton—after all, *someone* voted for him—you're probably wasting your breath trying to convince Uncle Billy that the former president will someday rank among the worst of our presidents. (You will, however, have many opportunities to practice your sense of humor, as in: "Look, Uncle Billy! It's Bob Dole! Hey, I wonder if Bill Clinton will do Viagra ads, too. He'd be a natural!") In most cases, though, you'll want to follow some advice from a real Master of the Universe regarding those who will not listen: Shake the dust off your sandals and move on.

Commit yourself to one street fight beyond the kitchen table. If you oppose more gun control, join the National Rifle Association. If you oppose abortion, join your local pro-life group. If you like what you hear from a certain politician, call his office, explain clearly what resources you may offer, and join the fray. You may find that you will derive immense satisfaction from such commitment. You may also find that this commitment enhances your life in terms of friendship, personal growth, and knowledge of the human mind and heart. Talk without action is cheap; commit and add some gold to your words.

Take a cue from Hubert Humphrey and become a happy warrior. Two of the most dour men known to me are conservatives. Both have money, status, fine educations, and loving families, yet one of these men laughs as if laughter were an act of pain while the other one has literally never smiled in my presence. Becoming a happy warrior is tough on conservatives. We're the ones who usually have to keep order when the teacher leaves the room; who must constantly dash water over optimistic, grinning fools; who find our blood pressure rising over the insanity portrayed on television or the latest robbery by the federal government. When confronted by clown pastors or cocktail liberals, we usually feel the corners of our mouths tugging downward. But if we want to win friends, influence people, and keep our sanity and enthusiasm intact, we need to lift up both our hearts and the corners of our mouths.

Do these recommendations sound trite? Of course they do. But many other phrases—"God is love," "Better to die on your feet than to live on your knees," and "Don't talk with your mouth full"—also sound trite, yet they are true. Do these recommendations sound simplistic? Try putting just two or three of them into action, and you will find them less simple than they seem.

Let me close with a best-case scenario of how change may be effected. I know a doctor in the Midwest who purchased a flag to fly from the front porch of his suburban home. His eight-year-old son and some friends from school were playing nearby, and Eric called them over to say the Pledge of Allegiance while he raised the flag. He was astounded to find that none of the boys knew the pledge. He was further astounded to find that they never said it in school. He contacted the teacher and offered to teach the class the Pledge of Allegiance. He brought a small flag, hung it in front of the classroom, and taught the Pledge of Allegiance. They enjoyed the presentation so much that the school asked him to do an assembly program. Following the assembly, Eric found flags for each classroom. Now, every class in the school begins the day with the Pledge.

Two things should be clear from this example. First, well-prepared and enthusiastic espousal of our causes will make a difference in this world—a difference which we ourselves may never see, but which will happen nonetheless. By spending a little time, a little effort, and perhaps a little money, we can make a big difference in the world. And second: O.J. was guilty. You can take that one to the bank.

Jeff Minick is the owner of Saints and Scholars Book Company in Waynesville, North Carolina.

WILL FUTURE GENERATIONS READ *CHRONICLES*?

Perhaps a better question would be:

"Will* Chronicles *be there for future generations to read?"

If you believe that the answer should be "Yes," then help us secure the future of *Chronicles* by remembering us in your will. When you next review your will or living trust, ask your attorney to add a provision making a bequest to:

The Rockford Institute.

Your bequest can be either a fixed dollar amount or a percentage of your estate.

For more information, write or call:

Christopher Check
Executive Vice President
The Rockford Institute
928 North Main Street
Rockford, IL 61103
(815) 964-5811

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by George McCartney

Moments, Redeeming and Otherwise

Even the weakest films can have a redeeming moment or two. Whether it's a clever actor reinventing a shopworn role or an especially well-photographed scene, there is often enough to keep us from feeling entirely cheated of our time and money. This month's films underscore the point: None of the three really succeeds (one is inexcusably tendentious), but they all have something to offer.

Guy Ritchie's *Snatch* begins provocatively at a Hasidic diamond exchange in Antwerp. Five men in black overcoats, outsized homburgs, and sidecurls enter the premises discussing—what else?—the Annunciation. "It's a nice story," one observes. Another agrees: "After all, it's not every day a virgin conceives a son. And it was the virgin that got the attention. A couple of hundred years, you got the Holy Catholic Church." At this, a third member of the bearded entourage groans, "*Oy vey*!" Could this have anything to do with Ritchie's personal life? He has, as all the world knows, fathered a child with the Madonna of our time, a woman who gained celebrity by singing "Like a Virgin."

So far, so kosher. But then Ritchie shifts into *Pulp Fiction* overdrive, spinning plot upon plot. Robbers break into the exchange and steal a diamond "as big as your fist," which, upon their return to London, is promptly stolen by other thieves who are then chased by the original villains. Somehow both criminal teams find themselves in the middle of a dispute between bare-knuckle-boxing promoters. And so it goes. The film descends into a nearly nonstop manic montage punctuated with flashes of violence: Thugs feed their victims to pigs; someone chops off a corpse's arm; a gangster known as Bullet Tooth lives up to his name. All of this is played deadpan for yuks, but the relentless beatings, shootings, slashings, and maulings soon become numbingly tedious.

Then there's the dialogue: Ritchie, apparently, has been reading Raymond Chandler. One thug reminds another of the wisdom of adapting to circumstances, intoning, "When in Rome . . . " The other retorts, "I'm not in Rome, I'm in a hurry!"—lines directly stolen from Chandler's 1944 screenplay for *Double Indemnity*. As if to prove it pays to recycle the very best, Ritchie then makes the mistake of supplying some witticisms of his own coinage. The film's central villain, a murderous gangster in his 60's, declines sugar for his coffee, growling, "No thank you, I'm sweet enough." Later, he threatens some potential victims. "Do you know what nemesis means?" he hisses through his dentures. "It's a righteous infliction of retribution by an appropriate agent." This isn't Chandler; it's desperate.

The film is almost redeemed by Brad Pitt's performance as Mick, the Irish gypsy, a bare-knuckle champion with an unstoppable right cross and an hilariously impenetrable accent. He perfectly renders the confidence of a physically gifted young man blithely undaunted by his lower-class impoverishment. Unfortunately, the rest of Ritchie's film lacks Pitt's marvelously funny insouciance.

Shadow of the Vampire also has its moments. If nothing else, it's beautifully filmed and graced by fine actors. The film's premise, however, is fatally flawed. We are asked to believe that German director F.W. Murnau (John Malkovich) was so committed to aesthetic authenticity that he hired a real vampire to play the lead in *Nosferatu*, his 1922 adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

Despite the film's serious tone, it feels more like a "What If?" history sketch from *Saturday Night Live*. What if Clark Kent had been a German and fought for Hitler as *Übermensch*? What if Murnau's star, Max Schreck (Willem Dafoe) had been one of the undead?

These what-if differences are supposed to be alternately amusing and chilling, but I found them mildly curious at best. Why? Well, first, however historically significant, *Nosferatu* is a trite, ridiculously simplified adaptation of Stoker's text. Second, director E. Elias Merhige and his writer Steven Katz fail to suggest why anyone would find the tale at all compelling.

Although Murnau's silent film has been hailed as a masterpiece by many enthusiasts, I've always thought it quite charmless, little more than a cartoonish attempt to scare audiences. The monster looks pathetically weak: Murnau unaccountably decided to invest his vampire with the characteristics of a filthy, scrounging rat; his bloodsucker looks creepily feral, not seductively suave. He's a bald, beaked geek from a sideshow, his tall, thin frame sidling awkwardly with a hunched, arthritic stiffness. He looks about as threatening as an undernourished scarecrow. The film's only accomplishment is that it opened a vein of Dracula movies that remains unstaunched after 80 years. Still, the flow wasn't fully primed until Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula*, in which Bela Lugosi played the lead as a hypnotically seductive roué. The fusion of sex and horror is the public's preferred catnip.

If the Dracula story works at all, it does so as an allegory of sexual impulse deformed by repression until it erupts as a caricature of natural desire. That is why the count's primary victims are invariably young, engaged virgins. He bites their throats ostensibly to drink their life-giving blood, but his intentions are unmistakably erotic. The overly sheltered women swoon in his arms and awaken infected with his unhealthy lust. Their passions do not lead to new life, however, but to an eternal existence among the undead. Lust without love becomes an end in itself. Those in its grip are doomed to an

Snatch

Produced by Columbia Pictures
Directed and Written by Guy Ritchie
Released by Sony Pictures

Shadow of the Vampire

Produced by Saturn Films
Directed by E. Elias Merhige
Screenplay by Steven Katz
Released by Lion Gate Films

Thirteen Days

Produced by Kevin Costner and Beacon Communications
Directed by Roger Donaldson
Screenplay by Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow
Released by New Line Cinema

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

endless series of unsatisfying couplings, all sadly sterile of progeny. This plot line worked well for Stoker's novel and the few vampire films that adhered to it.

Absent Stoker's subtext, however, Murnau's film holds little interest. Perhaps that is why Merhige's deconstruction of it seems so oddly flat and literal. If his real vampire is playing the part of Dracula, then we must accept him as a real bloodsucker, not a metaphor. He is merely an ugly monster who needs human blood to survive, which is exactly how Dafoe has been directed to play the part. He does it very well, not only looking uncannily like Schreck but adding a weirdly furtive intensity to his precursor's performance. In keeping with the film's conceit, Merhige's Murnau is supposed to have privately contracted with this monster and then held him in check to protect his other actors, at least for the duration of the filming. Finding himself denied human prey so close at hand, Dafoe paces back and forth in short, mincing steps, glaring jerkily left and right, snuffling all the while like a frustrated rat. There is, however, no thwarted sexual desire in his performance. So what is this about? We're left with an early film director so madly obsessed with authenticity that he has no scruples about putting his cast in mortal danger. Is this an *ex post facto* plea for special effects good enough to dispense with the real thing?

Whatever Merhige's intentions, his daft little film is undeniably watchable. Not only do we get a beautiful tour of Berlin and Bremen, but the many scenes depicting Murnau directing *Nosferatu* also provide a fairly detailed look at how silent films were made.

Thirteen Days, a Kevin Costner production, presents a chilling scenario with its vivid dramatization of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. I have only one complaint: Its montage of fevered White House meetings, military preparations, and contemporary newsreels is so visually compelling that I am afraid many millions will mistake its script for documentary truth.

Director Roger Donaldson wants us to believe that Jack Kennedy (Bruce Greenwood), his brother Bobby (Steven Culp), and their boyhood friend and political advisor, Kenneth O'Donnell (Kevin Costner), saved us from nuclear holocaust when they faced down not only the Soviets (who had been impolite enough to put nuclear missiles in Cuba) but also America's military leaders, who saw the Russian *faux pas* as their opportunity to bomb the bejesus out of Castro. Instead of succumbing to the warmongering of the Pentagon, the Kennedys wisely steered America to a diplomatic compromise. After a few false starts, they listened to Adlai Stevenson, who urged a *quid pro quo*: America would remove the Jupiter missiles it had placed on Russia's border in Turkey, and Russia would haul its arsenal out of Cuba. Of course, the Kennedys being Kennedys, they insisted upon a face-saving proviso for their nation and—not incidentally—themselves. The missiles in Turkey would not be removed until months after the Russian arms left Cuba, and there would be no public acknowledgment of any linkage between the two withdrawals.

Donaldson presents this as a strategically brilliant victory, but was it? With Soviet antiaircraft guns firing on our U-2 surveillance planes, American battle ships about to fire on Russian transports, and armed nuclear warheads aimed at Washington, D.C., was Kennedy's bid for a public-relations coup worth the risk? The missiles in Turkey, after all, were obsolete and had been scheduled for removal well before the crisis occurred. Later, Jack would make the puerile boast, "I cut Khrushchev's nuts off"—his analogy of choice. When his staff had expressed reservations about invading the Bay of Pigs 18 months earlier, he had mocked their fears: "Everyone's grabbing their nuts on this." This testicular level of discourse reveals Kennedy's leadership for what it was: callow, unseasoned, and alarmingly impulsive.

You would never know this from Costner's worshipful film, of course. Donaldson and his writers, Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, portray Kennedy as a man of Zen-like patience. They have chosen to disregard his earlier hasty miscalculations regarding Cuba, revealing nothing about his bumbling of the Bay of Pigs invasion, even though it clearly led the Soviets to believe they could get away with their missile stunt. After initially supporting this CIA mission to help anti-Castro Cubans retake their homeland, Kennedy got cold feet and tried to limit our involvement for fear of what would happen to his administration if the risky operation failed. The decision was disastrous. Hundreds of men died, 1,200 were taken prisoner, and more than 100,000 dissenters on the island were arrested. The result was a major coup for Fidel Castro, whose popularity grew spectacularly in its aftermath. And the Soviets became convinced that Kennedy was both irresolute and incompetent, a judgment that clearly emboldened their Cold War ambitions.

None of this appears in the film. Kennedy is portrayed as a thoughtful, prudent world leader. We see him looking soulfully out of the Oval Office window as he deliberates on the fate of humanity. This does not comport with the man who reflexively analyzed his foreign policy in macho argot. A fan of Ian Fleming's James Bond adventures, Kennedy seems to have had the spoiled child's need to appear tough. In crises, he considered it a sign of weakness to "grab your nuts" and "look like a bum." But, when things went wrong, he let others take the fall. With only mild protest, he allowed his supporters to blame the Bay of Pigs on Dwight Eisenhower. Theodore Sorenson, for one, alleged that the invasion plans had already gathered unstoppable momentum under Ike and, therefore, Kennedy had no choice but to go along. Not so. Eisenhower had merely permitted discussion of an invasion, expressing strong doubts about its wisdom.

Faced with the missile threat, Kennedy's apparent restraint seems to have been more a case of paralysis. He didn't know whom to trust. Worse, he was almost as concerned about appearing weak as he was about provoking nuclear war. After temporizing several days, he came close to authorizing an airstrike. By that time, however, Maxwell Taylor and Curtis LeMay felt obliged to point out that the delay had given the Soviets time to assemble and arm the missiles. Since there was no certainty the first airstrike would destroy all the weapons at once, retaliation was not only possible, but probable. (The film, of course, portrays the generals as rabidly unwavering in their desire to attack throughout the 13-day crisis, regardless of changing conditions on the ground.) Kennedy dropped the machismo and went for the trade-off. The film portrays his decision as the choice of a statesman; perhaps it was, at that moment. But we must not overlook—as the film so deliberately does—that Kennedy's curious blend of juvenile bravado and cautious self-regard had brought this nation to such a fatal pass.

Suggesting this, of course, would be tantamount to apostasy in Hollywood. Costner couldn't allow inconvenient facts to topple the shrine. c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At Last!

A book that exposes the true cultural significance of the Clinton presidency

The Nonpatriotic President: A Survey of the Clinton Years
by Janet Scott Barlow

Whitewater . . . Filegate . . . Monica Lewinsky
The scandals are only the beginning

If you think that Bill Clinton's influence will end when he leaves office, you need to read this book. With her inimitable wit and devastating logic, Janet Scott Barlow assesses the real—and lasting—damage wrought by the Clinton presidency.

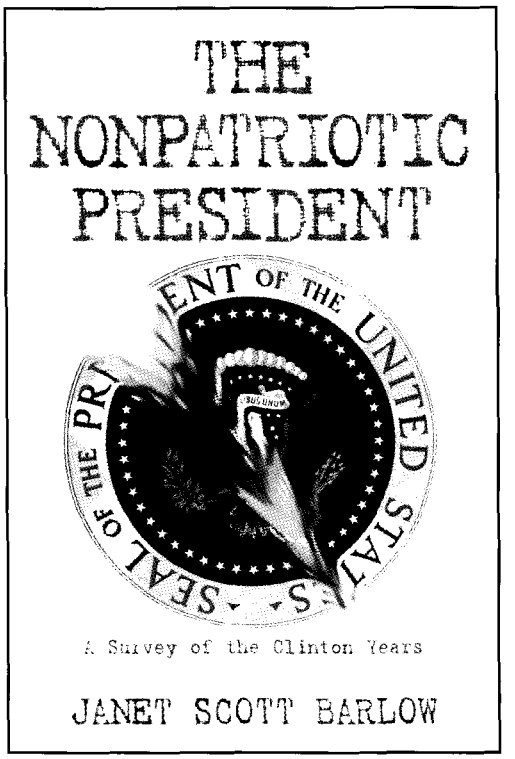
◆

"The letter carriers think they have toted some sacks of angry, pro-Clinton mail! Just wait. It is going to be very easy to get mad at Mrs. Barlow. The lady swings a mean rolling pin. (Would Hillary regard that metaphor as sexist? Good, let's keep it.)"

—From the Introduction by William Murchison
of the *Dallas Morning News*

◆

The Nonpatriotic President features 20 hard-hitting chapters, including: "My Nixon," "Communication as Manipulation," "Hillaryland," "It's About Sex," "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and "The Politics of Arrogance."



Book Order Form (please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery)

Softcover Price $15.95
($12.95 + $3.00 shipping and handling each)

X Quantity _____

Total _____

Please mail form (with payment) to:
Chronicles/Products
P.O. Box 800
Mount Morris, IL 61054

or, to order toll-free,
call 1-800-397-8160

AJSB4

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

☐ Check or money order enclosed

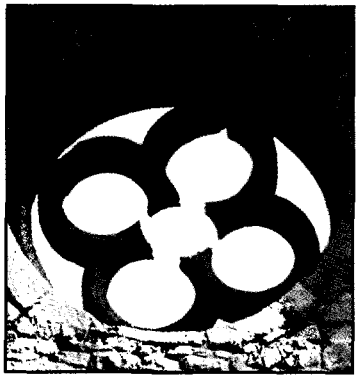
☐ Please bill my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex

Card #_____

Expiration Date_____

Signature_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Rockford Institute's Third International Convivium

THE UNSINKABLE ISLAND

Norsemen, Anglo-Normans, and Celts came to conquer and ended up going native. The capacity of the Irish to endure conquest and convert their "masters" makes a great story—told incomparably by their poets, novelists, dramatists, and pub raconteurs without whom (if you believe them) English literature would have been a paltry affair.

Join

Chronicles editors **Thomas Fleming, Scott P. Richert,** and **George McCartney**

as well as special guests

Gerard Casey and **Mary Ellen Synon**

for

The Rockford Institute's Third Convivium

May 21-28, 2001

as we explore the Celtic legends of truculent heroes and even more truculent monks, the periodic invasions and revivals, the poetry and song, and the Irish literary heroes:

Swift, Burke, Moore, Yeats, and Joyce.

Spend three nights in Dublin's delightful Davenport Hotel, with morning lectures and discussions and afternoons exploring this ancient and beautiful city.

Spend three nights in Cashel's Cashel Palace Hotel—once an 18th-century archbishop's palace, now a luxury getaway—with excursions to the Rock of Cashel, Kilkenny, Cahir Castle, and Holy Cross Abbey (and optional golf and trout fishing).

The final night and farewell dinner will be back in Dublin.

The price for the Convivium includes lodging for seven nights; full Irish breakfast and dinner; transportation to and from Cashel; and all excursions and lectures.

For more details, call:
Christopher Check, Executive Vice President, (815) 964-5811

Early Bird Rates: ❑ Single: $2,295.00 ❑ Couple: $3,795.00

N.B.: All prices increase by $250.00 after April 15, 2001.

Name(s)_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

Phone, Fax, E-mail_____

Send registration form with payment to:

The Rockford Institute
928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED